HE DIARY OF GIDEON WELLES

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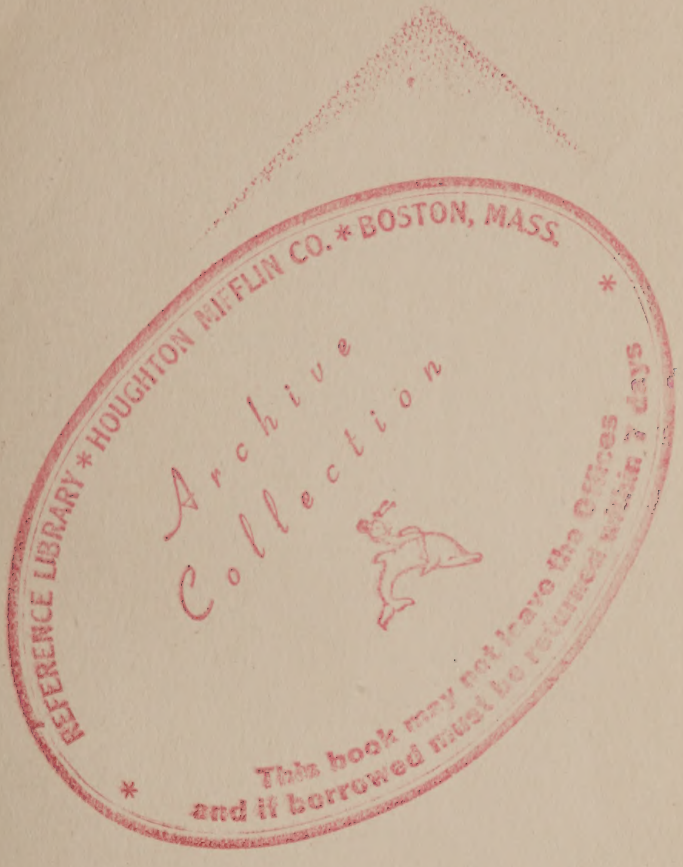
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DIARY OF
GIDEON WELLES

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOLUME I

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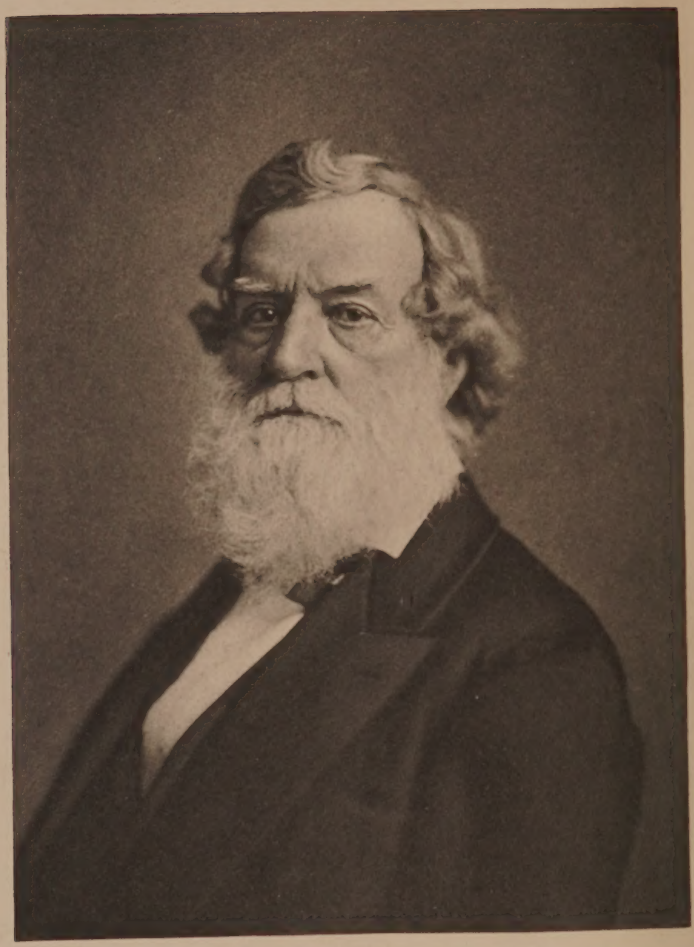

Gideon Welles

DIARY OF
GIDEON WELLES

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY UNDER
LINCOLN AND JOHNSON

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY JOHN T. MORSE, JR.
AND
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME I

1861—MARCH 30, 1864

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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PREFACE

It was the custom of my father all his life to keep a diary. He was a prolific writer on political subjects and his evenings were generally spent with his pen in his hand. When in Washington, it was his habit in the evening, after the family had retired, to devote his time to writing in the diary. His public duties at that period gave him no time to devote to the miscellaneous writings to which he had been accustomed. But in the diary are expressed his views on public men and measures, not only of the day but also those gathered throughout his public life. It was a relaxation to him to write; in fact, being thoroughly accustomed to it, it was a pleasure.

The question of the publication of this diary has caused me much serious reflection. It is an unreserved expression of what was from day to day in the mind of the writer. He probably thought that it would be useful as a record of the events of the time. Certainly he did not think it would be wholly unheeded.

But his expressions were not shaped by the consideration that it would be given to the world or would not be; the decision of that question he left to me. Accordingly, I have taken the advice of those in whom I know my father would have the most implicit confidence, submitting the material for consideration and review. Without exception, I believe, the decision has been that duty requires of me the publication, and the truth of history demands that under no circumstances must I fail to make this record public. It had seemed to me that the free criticism and personal allusions should have been in some degree elim-

inated, but the advice of the most eminent authorities has been adverse to any omission. I should have much preferred it otherwise, but have yielded to those to whose judgment I should defer. A few strong expressions, purely personal and private, have been omitted, but the omission has always been indicated and the reader may have full confidence that the text of the diary has been in no way mutilated or revised.

I desire to express my obligations to the publishers for their careful and painstaking work. Too much credit cannot be given them for their labors and the result.

EDGAR T. WELLES.

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INTRODUCTION

Mr. Welles was in his fifty-eighth year at the time of his entry into the Cabinet of President Lincoln, at which point these volumes take up the story of his life. A brief account of what he had done during these preceding years will have at least the interest of displaying what preparation and equipment he brought to the important office which he was called upon to fill.

His earliest American ancestor escaped the distinction of being one of the Mayflower band by only a very few years; he arrived, however, in time to take part in the settling of Hartford, becoming "identified with its fortunes as early as 1636"; and serving as Treasurer, and later as Governor, of the Colony. Upon an estate in Glastonbury, bought by this ancestor from the Indians, Gideon Welles was born July 1, 1802. He was educated at the Protestant Episcopal Academy at Cheshire, and at Norwich University. Afterward he studied law, and the mental influence of this training was plainly perceptible throughout his active life, though he left the profession so early as January, 1826. He then took charge of the *Hartford Times*, a Democratic sheet, which soon afterward gave its influence in behalf of Andrew Jackson for the Presidency. This act of political friendship, and the prominence of Mr. Welles in party politics in Connecticut naturally led to his becoming Jackson's chief adviser in the local affairs of that State. He continued his editorial labors so long as his leader remained in the White House; also occupying collaterally the position of Representative from Glastonbury in the State legislature from 1827 to 1835. We are told that in matters political his "sagacity seemed to be almost unfailing." Certainly his views were liberal and progressive, in evidence whereof is the fact that, when the Supreme

Court of the State held that a disbeliever in a future state of rewards and punishments was incompetent as a witness, Mr. Welles led a persistent and at last successful struggle for legislation which reduced this requirement of faith in heaven and hell as a basis of credibility to the more moderate dimension of belief in a God. He further aided in effecting the abolition of imprisonment for mere debt. Under Van Buren, from 1836 to 1841, he was Postmaster at Hartford, which was then the central office for the distribution of the mail throughout New England. In 1842, he was elected by popular vote to the office of State Comptroller, and in 1843 was reëlected. In 1846 he was appointed by Polk to be Chief of the Bureau of Provisions and Clothing for the Navy, and held the place till the summer of 1849.

With the administration of Polk and the annexation of territory as a result of the Mexican War, the slavery question became predominant in national politics. Thus far Mr. Welles had been a Democrat and a democrat, alike with the capital D and with the small letter. There is a very material difference between these two words, Democrat and democrat, though proof-readers have not always been awake to the important distinction. The party of that name has adopted President Jefferson as at least the most distinguished expounder, if not the founder of the American variety of their political creed. Yet Jefferson was democratic only with very large reservations; he excited Hamilton to frenzy by his extravagant preachments about the rule of the masses, but in fact he never had a suspicion that the ruling masses could be so wrong-headed as not to take their doctrines from gentlemen of intelligence like himself, and he assumed as basic matter of course that the common people would have the common sense to select presidents, governors, and rulers generally from that class of the community whose superior fitness for these functions Mr. Jefferson regarded as a postulate. Genuine democracy found its way into the Presidency with

Andrew Jackson. But when, later on, the Democracy, as a political party, became the party of the Southern slavocracy, it certainly had no longer any right to use the adjective with the little *d*; on the contrary it had the honesty, or the pride, to boast itself to be the party of aristocracy. At the same time, however, it retained, because it found very useful, the old Democratic doctrines of State rights and of strict construction of the Constitution. A practical concrete problem, however, was now coming into entire possession of men's minds to the exclusion of all else. There were no survivals of old questions, and political theories and principles had either to prove themselves malleable or to be rejected by their old-time followers, when the perpetuation and therefore the extension of Slavery came to the front. There was a new alignment throughout the Northern half of the country, and at once multitudes of independent men, refusing to be controlled by a political misnomer, crossed over from the slavocratic and aristocratic Democracy to the new, humanitarian, and democratic Republicanism. There was no use in raising the cry of apostasy; for the apostates were too numerous and too respectable to be described by so discreditable a name; and, moreover, it was quite obvious that no political consistency compelled a Democrat under Jackson and Van Buren to remain a Democrat under Pierce or Buchanan. There was certainly no continuity or succession between the destruction of the Bank of the United States, for example, and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.

The infusion of a great moral issue into politics, which ordinarily have little enough to do with the moralities, inevitably changed the point of view for any man who felt the old Puritan conscience strong within him. In the customary run of public business, the average man embarks on board his party as on board a ship for a long voyage, and does not get off at the first port because he has not always been entirely delighted with all the arrangements; if, however, he wants to go north and he finds that the

captain is sailing south, he is likely to take the first opportunity of parting company. Thus it very naturally came about that the democratic Gideon Welles, being a clear-headed, independent, and conscientious person, ceased to be a Democrat, and became a Republican. Moreover, in a certain way it might be argued that consistency itself led him to this action, for the theory of State rights, always advocated by him, involved the repudiation of the Democratic move for the establishment of slavery in the Territories under cover of the national authority, this being the sure basis and prejudgment for its establishment in the later development of the State.

The change of political allegiance induced no change of occupation, and Mr. Welles now became a contributor to the *Hartford Evening Press*, which was designed to be the organ of Republicanism in the State. In 1856 he had the courage, as Republican candidate for Governor, to face sure defeat in a cause in which he believed. About the same time, by choice of the Republican Convention which assembled in Philadelphia, he entered upon what proved to be an eight years' term of service as a member of the Republican National Committee; also he was chairman of the delegation from his State to the Convention at Chicago which nominated Abraham Lincoln.

President Lincoln's courteous patience in listening to advice, and his desire always by consultation to get the benefit of suggestions, obscured for a while in the public eye his underlying self-reliance and the independence of his ultimate judgment. The suspicion that his course was often steered by another hand than his own has only died slowly, as careful study of his career and the accumulation of much evidence have enforced quite the contrary conviction. Yet a shrewd observer might have forecast the truth at the outset, from the formation of his Cabinet; for in no other matter are political bargaining, wire-pulling, and pressure more vigorously exercised than in Cabinet-making; yet of the seven men who constituted his ministry, his

hand was forced only in the selection of Cameron, and even there the forcing was perhaps not oppressive. Certainly the other six represented his personal choice, and no other among them represented it more than did Mr. Welles, whose career up to this point had given him no controlling prestige such as that which would have made the omission of Seward or Chase a matter of criticism. So far as is known, no pressure, either political or personal, was brought to bear; and it was Mr. Welles's record, as it has been narrated above, which led Mr. Lincoln to invite him into the Cabinet. The Diary has the story of the selection in conclusive shape. Wanting a man from New England, Lincoln took an ex-Democrat, trained in public business, who had manifested his courage and the earnestness of his conviction by casting loose from his old associates on the question of slavery; and who also, it may be noted, had shown a natural aptitude for politics, a quality which Mr. Lincoln, possessing it himself in a high degree, did not undervalue in others.

Precisely why the Navy Department was allotted to Mr. Welles is not clear. Perhaps the citizen of an inland State, who probably enough had never seen an ocean-going ship, was influenced by the flavor of maritime commerce and prowess which still in 1860 hung faintly about the wharves of New England, and Mr. Lincoln may have thought that any New Englander must be amphibious; or he may have been affected by memory of the office held by Mr. Welles under Mr. Polk, slight as had been the nautical flavor of those commercial functions. When, however, Mr. Welles suggests that Secretary Chase, though having a "good deal of ability," yet "has never made finance his study," and again when he shoots at his favorite target, Senator Hale, Chairman of the Naval Committee, the slurring words "embarrassed by no military or naval teaching," the reader may smile at the obvious "*tu quoque*" retort, which certainly lay ready at the hand of each of these gentlemen. Neither of them used it, for

neither of them had the privilege of looking over Mr. Welles's shoulder as he poured his feelings over the confidential pages of his Diary. But when, later on in his administration, other persons, sundry "disappointed men," suggested that some one with more real salt-sea experience than Mr. Welles had would fill the place better, Mr. Welles writes that there "is a set of factious fools who think it wise to be censorious, and it is almost as amusing as it is vexatious to hear and read the remarks of these Solomons," these "officious blockheads," who have the simplicity to allege that the Secretary of the Navy should have had personal experience on shipboard. One of these critics, he records, has been a shipowner, another has been a shipmaster; "successful business men, but egotistical and vainly weak. Neither is competent to administer the Navy Department." Comforting reflections, and very possibly altogether true, yet it may be permitted to remark, *obiter*, that the layman does not, by familiarity with the spectacle, cease to feel bewilderment at the utter indifference nearly always shown as to preparatory training or specialist knowledge in the allotment of cabinet places. It is surprising to see that a system which might *a priori* be regarded as of dubious promise has so often worked fairly well. At the same time, one cannot but wish that on some occasion, when there is one of those temporary lulls which occur from time to time in party struggles, when partisan considerations might without grave peril give good sense a passing chance, an incoming President would have the originality and courage to compose a Cabinet of men able and thoroughly versed in the Departments which they are called to administer. It is possible that the results might be very satisfactory; at least, the experiment would be interesting and instructive. Of course it was not tried by Mr. Lincoln any more than it has been by other Presidents, his predecessors and successors. He made a journalist Secretary of the Navy, and let us admit that the journalist proved to be a very good Secretary and rejoice that he

approved himself also a first-rate Diarist. In fact, if he had been a much worse Secretary, we should readily have pardoned his shortcomings on the ground of his eminent success in a matter which now and for us is of much more interest.

Certain it is that in this Diary we have the best "Cabinet Interior" which hangs upon the walls of the American room in the world's Gallery of History. It at once recalls and provokes comparison with that other famous and more bulky diary in which John Quincy Adams confided to posterity his appreciation of his own good qualities and the failings of his contemporaries. Between the two there are interesting points, both of resemblance and of contrast. Both diarists were fine examples of the moral and intellectual civilization of the New England of their times. Though not quite contemporaries, they were types of a racial development which became complete during the period of their joint lifetimes. They were intelligent descendants of the old Pilgrim stock, untiring seekers of knowledge, clear thinkers amid their surroundings, with little wit or humor and no imagination. They had the solid moralities, but were somewhat deficient in the gentler ones. They established high standards as much for themselves as for others; and to ordinary mortals, who seemed to fall below these standards they doled out Christian charity with much economy; yet the reflection that the delinquents, thus scored by our diarists, were largely professional politicians may lead us to a like economy of sympathy for them. Both men manifest a consciousness of perfect rectitude of intention, which undoubtedly they both had; for more upright men never lived; neither could have been induced by any possible temptation to do a selfish or mean or in any way unworthy act. It should be said, however, that Mr. Welles is not beset by that self-admiration which from matins to vespers ceaselessly worried Mr. Adams, so that he seems forever sitting to himself for his own portrait, whereas Mr. Welles's portrayal of himself, such as it is, was made with-

out intention; for which reason his pages are not rendered wearisome by vanity, or by disingenuous depreciation of his own merit. Both men are censorious, but Mr. Welles is almost never acrid; his judgments are severe, but not unfair, not malicious, not often ill-tempered and perhaps never really vindictive. They would seem less scathing at times, if they were tempered with humor; but, in the absence of this, we have the next most enlivening quality on the occasions when he indulges in honest and hearty sarcasm. This he could do very well, as, for example, when he speaks of one Alden as "patriotic when there was no danger," actually, though erroneously, believing himself to be courageous, and "really anxious to do something without encountering enemies." When he cuts, he does it trenchantly, and when he abuses, he strikes hard and straight. He is a fair fighter, and does not grumble too much at the like treatment when dealt to himself, although it must seem to him undeserved and at times proceeding from unworthy motives. If he is not witty, he has more really valuable merits: he is very fair and just; he is frank and manly; he is intelligent, alert, and well-informed, with the result that no more trustworthy material than his pages can come to the table of the historian or the hands of the reader.

It is of some interest to establish what is the correct value of diaries in historical literature. When a politician sees to his dismay that a fickle and ill-advised public is giving itself over to be led astray by his perfidious opponent, he is prone to seek somewhat juiceless consolation in references to the "verdict of history" or the "verdict of posterity." Both verdicts are much the same, for both dignified phrases signify only that vague general impression which has been sent filtering through the public mind by those historians who can write sufficiently pleasingly to secure readers. These writers are really counsel, or advocates, unpaid for the most part, and therefore reasonably honest; and who generally mean to examine the evidence with an open mind, and to take their volunteer brief for the

man or cause whom or which, upon that evidence, they believe to be right. Not long ago, the task of editing the private writings of any deceased public man was taken to imply the duty of excision and amendment so as to bring the printed pages into accord with supposed proprieties. It was not unlike grooming a horse for exhibition. Now, however, it is understood that such editorial action is in point of morality much the same thing as tampering with a witness or perverting his testimony. Suppress diaries or letters if you cannot print them as they were written; but know that you are dishonest if, without avowal, you publish under a man's name mutilated excerpts of what he really wrote. No other evidence can be more sacred than a diary, which the world accepts as confidential truth. Before a judge or jurors the *viva voce* testimony of a witness in presence outweighs in real influence a dozen depositions of absent deponents, and for the historian a diary or a letter takes the place of this best and most trustworthy of all possible evidence, and is to be respected accordingly. In this point of view, this Diary of Mr. Welles is among the most valuable documents within reach of our historical writers. As between the two, a diary should be accorded greater value than letters, for it is apt to be more ingenuous, more honest. Thus it is not possible to imagine that any historian can possibly have access to better evidence than this Diary of Mr. Welles. Of course, either letters or diaries, if written with an eye to posthumous publication, may be intentionally miscolored; but it is much harder to be consistently disingenuous in a diary than in correspondence; the diary written in the evening is united to the day as a limb to the body; the same life-blood gives the vital heat and spirit to both; the palpitation of the day's actings and talkings still throbs in the evening's account of them. It is almost a part of the *res gestæ*. The diary is written to one's self; the letter is written to a person whose own individuality of character, opinions, and temper often unconsciously react upon the writer; the letter may have

an exterior object, which the diary never can have, since it can have no other value for its writer than that of a correct record. The "personal equation," as it is called, signifying the moral, mental, and temperamental qualities and idiosyncracies of the diarist, must of course be studied and allowed for, just as the navigator must study the dip and variation of the compass; otherwise historian and navigator may both go wrong. But the observant reader cannot long rest in the intimacy of the diarist without getting at least what may be called a good average knowledge of his character. If these views as to diaries are correct, it is certainly difficult to exaggerate the value and interest which attach to this Diary of Mr. Welles; that he wrote it is most fortunate; its suppression would properly have been regarded as a national disaster, as its faithful presentation is of inestimable advantage.

The true function of the diary is to talk to us about individuals, not to instruct us as to events, — and how much more interesting this is! In fact, the historian may well be better informed as to events and facts than the diarist can be, for the historian has access to immense accumulations of evidence which the diarist never knew, but which through the long years have come slowly leaking into light from desks and attics and hiding-places innumerable. On the other hand, history is comparatively weak in the matter of individual character, which posterity can rarely know as contemporaries do. They see and hear the living man; they know not only his conspicuous acts but also all the little ones; they hear of him from the men who deal with him, and they know more or less of those men also; they get and sift the gossip, good and bad. If a man's contemporaries fail to find out what he is, posterity rarely will do better; though this latter case may befall through strange belated discoveries, and, in fact, has befallen precisely within the region of this Welles Diary; for President Lincoln is unquestionably better estimated to-day than he was during his lifetime, and is in some respects more ac-

curately known to us than he was to his own Ministers. The patience with which he could wait while causes slowly produced results, his remarkable combination of respect for the opinion of others with absolute reliance upon his own opinion, his forbearance, tact, shrewdness, foresight, and fairness, are all qualities which could not be fairly seen at short range and as they were at work, but which, by reason of careful study and the ever-growing accumulation of facts, we have come to know as our fathers could not know them. Generally, however, more is lost than gained by distance in the estimation of character, and the most vivid and attractive biographies are probably far from photographic. We may read lives of Washington till our eyes ache, but are they all worth a few hours of chat about him with Lafayette, or Hamilton, or even with Jefferson? These are the witnesses we want to hear, and the nearest approach to such witnesses, where all are silent in death, we find in the diarist.

As, therefore, was naturally to be expected, this Diary contributes little new knowledge concerning events, and settles few of those many discussions to which the Civil War gave rise. On the other hand, it presents an invaluable row of portraits; so that there are indeed no other records which can at all be brought into even remote comparison with it for that interesting period. Mr. Welles had extraordinary insight into men, and a very happy skill in depicting them; at least we are bound to think so, for there is a remarkable agreement between what he wrote in those days when our past was his present, and what our historians and biographers are now setting forth as the dispassionate valuations of posterity. Such harmony is agreeably reassuring as to the accuracy of the judgments which we are to-day accepting. So far as Mr. Welles is concerned, his even-mindedness is a very unique quality; as a rule, the climate of the contemporary writings during our Civil War had no temperate zone; whether beneath the sunshine of hero-worship or amid cyclones of denunciation, there was always

equatorial fervor. It is only Mr. Welles who, so far as we know, was at once shrewd and judicial. Perhaps he was a little Rhadamanthine. If, however, there seems a tendency to severity, it is not due to unkindness of disposition, but rather to the intensity of the times and the tremendous stress of feeling. Those were not ordinary days when selfish ambition and incompetence could be passed over as ordinary sins; the men who were guilty of them were to be branded, and Mr. Welles branded them; it was a time for Hebraic wrath rather than for Christian charity; moreover, Mr. Welles was as exacting towards himself as towards others, and gave a devotion as unselfish as that which he demanded. Be this as it may, whether he was severe or not, how strong and vivid is his portraiture even in his minor characters! Thus a page or two depicts Banks with perfect accuracy; a few scattered paragraphs present Du Pont to the life; and so on through many instances. Herein is proof of the real artist; this making every minor character as lifelike an individuality as are the leaders is the Shakespearian quality. Naturally, however, it is the sketches of the leaders which have the most interest, and which best illustrate the shrewd and just perception of Mr. Welles. Take, for example, McClellan. In the procession of admirers which heralded the advent of this military savior none blew a more confident trumpet than did Secretary Chase. Later when the savior had lamentably failed to save, Mr. Chase not less vehemently denounced him, calling him "an imbecile, a coward, and a traitor," and summoning Mr. Welles to cry Amen. But that gentleman recalled that he had set an interrogation mark against the name of the hero at the time of his first introduction, and said that, having afterward avoided the error of exaltation, he would not now fall into the injustice of damnation. During the time when Chase was lauding McClellan, nineteen out of every twenty loyal Northerners were of the like mind; later at least seventeen out of every twenty sympathized in some measure with the condemnation. All the

while Mr. Welles is from time to time setting down in his Diary such an average and temperate valuation as may be found in almost any modern history.

But the name of McClellan has become wearisome, and most readers will get more entertainment in Mr. Welles's picture of another of the failures, a picture which is astonishingly lifelike, considering how little life there was in the subject. One may read much about the Civil War without often happening upon the name of Halleck, yet for a very long while that harmless professor of the arts of slaughter and destruction was showing how peacefully he could conduct these processes, as he sat, obscurely sluggish and silent, at his desk in Washington, officially superintending the entire strategy of all the Northern forces, chewing his cigar, and rubbing his elbows. How that habitual gesture of his exasperated Mr. Welles! When the rubbing began, the friction seemed to spread from the Halleck coat-sleeve to the whole Welles system. All that Mr. Welles says about Halleck is at once amusing, severe, and just; and to the irritating influence which the General exercised upon the Secretary we owe some lively pictures, among pages whereon picturesque liveliness yields somewhat too much room to careful accuracy. "Called this morning," says the Diary in one instance, "on General Halleck, who had forgotten, or was not aware, there was a naval force in the James River, coöperating with the army!" Mr. Welles assured the great chieftain that such was indeed the fact; then the General, perplexed as to whether the vessels should be retained or withdrawn, went to work upon his elbows, and rubbed out the conclusion that they might as well be withdrawn. Then Mr. Welles suggested that they might as well stay, and the General immediately thought so too. It was a fair specimen of Halleck's inefficiency, and in those critical days inefficiency might be as harmful as treason. Mr. Welles chafed impatiently, while others tardily learned what he so well knew; and meantime he confided to his Diary that Halleck "is heavy-headed,"

"may have some talent as a writer or critic," but "in all military matters seems destitute of resources, skill, or capacity," is "more tardy and irresolute than McClellan," with much more to the like disrespectful purport. It is all just what any writer would say to-day; Mr. Welles was only writing the "verdict of history" in advance.

Another victim furnished for the especial gratification of those imperfect Christians who derive a pleasurable sensation at the spectacle of a sound drubbing administered with whole-hearted thoroughness, is the Honorable John P. Hale, of the Senate, Chairman of the Naval Committee. For a while, Mr. Hale was mistaken for a man of some consequence on the alleged ground of character and ability, and before this view had been fully corrected he was able to make trouble for the Secretary, with the amusing result of calling forth many vivacious comments. Thus, Mr. Welles tells us that Hale, having at the outset defied, scorned, and derided secession, "was one of the first to flee from Washington when the storm was about to burst"; but later, the Capital being "garrisoned and shielded by a large army, this burning and eloquent patriot returned, overflowing with courage," and "in the exuberance of his zeal" set on foot an inquiry as to the loss of the Norfolk Navy Yard. In a "patronizing way" he offered to hear any explanation which the Secretary of the Navy might offer concerning this painful incident. If he could have read what the world can now read, he would have neglected the defense of Norfolk for the defense of Hale! Later we learn and sympathetically believe that he was "lazy, noisy," a "harlequin" and "demagogue," a "Senatorial buffoon," without "application or fidelity," who is "neither honest nor sincere"; and in later pages the charges become even more serious. In the improbable event that there are any persons who will care to object to the erasure of Mr. Hale's name from the roll of the country's great men, certainly ample provocation is now given to them for making themselves heard.

Of course, not many pages can be turned without encountering the names of Seward, Chase, and Stanton. Of these, Stanton, the friendless one, evidently affected Mr. Welles as he affected pretty much every one else who came much into contact with him. No one liked him living; scarcely any one has wished to say much for him dead. An advocate biographer has indeed presented a sort of brief for him, and Mr. Rhodes, kindliest of historians, has mentioned his virtues; for, in fact, he had virtues, — devotion to the cause, a very greed for hard work, financial integrity, and merciless energy against the rascal contractors. But it cannot be forgotten that he had the odious faults of a bully; he was violent and insolent, but only when violence and insolence were safe; he was supposed to be personally timid; he could be mean and unjust; above all he repeatedly outraged the magnanimous forbearance of Mr. Lincoln in a way which no American can forgive. Substantially every writer's pen is against him; or, at least, no writer's pen is for him. Mr. Welles rends him and tears him without mercy and returns to mangle and to toss again, nor even so provokes the reader to interfere to save the prey; we can all read the sentences with equanimity; many of us will read them with cheerful sympathy. The two men, after a few tentative feints and clashes, had inevitably to try out their comparative strength in a conclusive bout. It took place, and thereafter Mr. Stanton rarely ventured into Mr. Welles's path. He had learned that the Navy Department was not a province or subdivision of the War Department and that coöperation of vessels with land forces did not imply subordination of the Navy to the Army. Delightfully spirited and vivid perhaps beyond all others in the Diary are the pages which narrate the conferences of President and Ministers when first the startling foray of the Merrimac carried consternation, and then very soon the achievement of the beslurred Monitor, the "cheese-box" of the sarcastic critics, restored triumphant cheerfulness at the North.

There are few such sketches in history as that which Mr. Welles furnishes upon this occasion, availing splendidly of a splendid opportunity. Alas, poor Yorick! If Mr. Stanton could only have known that Mr. Welles was keeping a diary, and therein depicting this scene in vivid, undying colors, would not he at once have set about keeping one also? And how posterity might then have been entertained! At present it is too much like sitting at the prize-ring and seeing only one pugilist.

It is an odd fact that Mr. C. F. Adams was beset by an incapacity for appreciating Mr. Lincoln, which at once calls to mind the like incapacity of his grandfather for appreciating Washington. John Adams lived and died under the firm conviction that Washington was a vexatiously over-rated man; Mr. C. F. Adams carried to his grave a like certainty concerning Lincoln. He even had the imprudence to make public declaration of his unfortunate views, by delivering in 1873 a memorial address on Mr. Seward, wherein he said that from the birth of our government no other "experiment so rash had ever been made as that of elevating to the head of affairs a man with so little previous preparation for his task" as Mr. Lincoln had. Now it may be admitted that this allegation, construed with such literal narrowness as Jeffersonians would have used for construing the Constitution, was not grossly extravagant. The fact that the "experiment" turned out so wonderfully well that many devout persons have even seen in it the direct hand of God, of course does not prove that in the outset it was not "rash." It was only needlessly unkind on Mr. Adams's part to say that it was *more* "rash" than had been the selection of certain other persons who had been elevated to the same office, not only in spite of the fact that they had had little "previous preparation," but in spite of the even more disqualifying fact that they had given no reason for a belief in their fitness, and some reason to fear their unfitness. Apart from his then unproved qualities of combined character and intel-

lect, Mr. Lincoln's "preparation" had certainly been confined to a thorough study of the problem presented by slavery. It so happened, however, that slavery was at this critical moment so all-important as to be practically the *only* problem, and it also so happened that Mr. Lincoln understood it far better than any other man then living, not excepting Jefferson Davis, or Charles Sumner, or Mr. Adams himself. But though the above cited assertion, literally taken, was not so very depreciatory to Mr. Lincoln, the same could not be said of the general tone of the address, which stripped President Lincoln of credit and praise and conferred generously upon Mr. Seward all that was thus filched from his chief. If Mr. Adams's view of the situation was correct, the nation had been burning incense before the wrong altar.

Mr. Welles was stirred with indignation, so stirred that he came to the rescue of his great leader's reputation by writing and publishing a loyal little volume, which he called "Lincoln and Seward." What he said in this book has, in substance, been absorbed into our history, which has accepted Mr. Welles's views and has rejected, forgotten, and forever buried the contrary opinions of Mr. Adams. For this reason, because it has done its work, the book is not now very familiar to ordinary readers; but one finds a certain entertainment in comparing it with the Diary, and the comparison plainly indicates the superior value of an intimate daily outpouring of feelings, fresh and hot, as against the later expression of those feelings cooled and prepared for publication. In the book Mr. Welles civilly writes that he "enjoyed uninterruptedly pleasant social and official intercourse" with Mr. Seward. If the signification of these words be not trimmed to close literalness, they are likely to convey an impression of friendly harmony between the two men which is quite astonishing to the reader of the Diary. Further, the book alleges a relationship of "confidence and mutual frankness on public affairs . . . among all the members" of the Cabinet, sub-

ject only to such occasional interruptions of perfect cordiality as might be provoked by Mr. Seward's pretensions to superiority. Amid the many interpretations which may possibly be put upon the word "confidence" in this passage there can perhaps be suggested some one which may justify its use. Neither are there wanting sporadic instances of the presence of "frankness," that most ticklish of good qualities, the porcupine in the menagerie of virtues. For example, when Seward humbly admitted to Mr. Welles that he had learned that for the future he had "better attend to his own business," Mr. Welles hastened to meet him with a "cordial assent." No one will deny that on this occasion Mr. Welles evinced frankness. There are other cases also of plain speaking; yet the fact remains that he who reads the Diary will not be able to accept some of the statements which in later years found utterance in the book save as conventionalities or as spoken "in a Pickwickian sense," or perhaps in that spirit of serene magnanimity which is supposed to prevail in making preparation for a Christian death-bed. As matter of plain fact, the Diary is thickly sprinkled with criticisms of Mr. Seward because of his pretentious bearing, his assumption of the rôle of a premier in the Cabinet, his airs of mystery and his affectation of special information and of private knowledge in affairs, above all else by reason of his passion for meddling and his irritating forays into the independent Departments of his associates. The most noteworthy instance of this was the disastrous occult interference of Mr. Seward in the matter of relieving Fort Sumter. The error had to be admitted by him and ostensibly forgiven by Mr. Welles, but it was never forgotten and never ceased to rankle. Soon afterward came the long and serious dispute as to the disposition to be made of foreign mails captured on blockade-runners. Here again Seward undertook to settle the whole business autocratically in his own office. Mr. Welles resented and resisted, and was clearly in the right; but Mr. Seward had committed himself to the English gov-

ernment and the embarrassment was grave. All the strictures made by Mr. Welles concerning Seward have been made by others, and none of them lacks foundation; yet it must be said that of all the pictures in these volumes that of Seward is the most open to the criticism of doing scant justice, if not actual injustice, to the subject. Probably Mr. Seward was rated more highly by his own generation than he will be by posterity; but probably also he will be held in better esteem than would be possible if there were no other evidence concerning him than what could be drawn from this Diary. He was at once an able man and a frequent blunderer. On the whole, one feels that when speaking of him Mr. Welles is certainly less well balanced than usual. Possibly this is due to the fact that they clashed frequently, since maritime matters and foreign relations inevitably crossed in many complications. In such Mr. Welles was more apt to have sound as well as courageous views than was his associate minister.

While thus, day by day, Mr. Welles is consciously drawing for us the portraits of his colleagues, he is also day by day, but quite unconsciously, giving us the lines, the lights, and the shadows for his own portrait. While we are learning what he thinks of others and why, we are likewise deciding what we think of him upon evidence of a kind that is next best to personal acquaintance. In the main, the conclusions are much to his credit. When we see that all his brains, his heart, his strength were strenuously engaged in the cause, we know that the same can be said of many others; when we see that he was more than respectfully obedient, that he was always nobly loyal and wisely sustaining towards his chief, we admit that some others were the same; but when we see that he was absolutely devoid of any ulterior ambition or personal motives or any form of self-seeking, that he was almost indifferent concerning his own reputation so long as he was conscious of having done his duty with all his might and all his intelligence, then at length we say that in some respects he was very

near to being singular. He had strong opinions as to men as well as measures, and expressed them; but he was a clear thinker, and, being by nature fair-minded, he further took pains not to permit either passion or prejudice to divert the movement of his reasoning. When his mind was made up, however, he did not easily change his opinion; and one would not be surprised if it should appear that Seward and Stanton thought him obstinate, or opinionated, or even contentious. Yet he made fewer errors than they did. He made some, of course, and if this Diary had been expurgated with a view to exhibiting him as infallible, a few passages which appear therein would have been suppressed.

For example, he was one of those who deprecated the difficult task of blockading the Southern ports, on the ground that it was a needless recognition of belligerency involving injurious consequences; nor does it seem that he ever came to see how academic and impracticable would have been a closure by proclamation. Again he had a distrust of "the West Point idea," as it was called, which would have been unfortunate if his Department had been concerned with operations on the land instead of on the water. He shared the too prevalent faith in the possibility of making generals out of any sort of civilian material, just as it was assumed that military coats might be made at any mill. It took a sad amount of experience and many poor soldiers had to shiver before it was well recognized that a shoddy mill turned out poor stuff for hard service, and that extemporized commanders, made out of politicians or lawyers, were generally out of place at the top, however well they might do halfway up. He protested much against the establishment of a "military frontier," with the general grouping of all residents south of it as Rebels. He said that this was the fallacious notion of technical military theorists; whereas the truth was that the shifting line of the frontier was simply the expression in military phraseology of an actual condition; not a manœuvre was ever affected by the language; and the

attribution of rebellion to the Southern population *en bloc* was simply a necessity and was not far wrong either. Disaffection was a germ disease which rapidly spread among residents in the unwholesome district. Another matter concerning which Mr. Welles expressed disapprobation was the issue of legal-tender notes. This affected him personally, or rather the administration of his Department, in a very embarrassing manner; for the sums at his disposal, voted in dollars but obtained sometimes by bills of exchange, were subject to large discount. Thus the shoe pinched. But while this was vexatious, it was not the fundamental cause of his criticism of the policy recommended by the Treasury Department and adopted by Congress, and which he conceived to be unnecessary and mischievous. Whether or not he was right no one can say; for while we know that the country struggled along under the incubus of those financial measures, we can only speculate as to whether or not it could have fared better or even at all without them. Suffice it to say that some students of the subject have very stoutly maintained the same opinion which Mr. Welles expressed.

These views relating to matters outside Mr. Welles's own Department, and so finding no expression in action, did not diminish his reputation. Nearly or quite every great reputation gained at that period survived as many or more, as bad or worse, misconceptions; and inevitably so, for amid such novel problems and unprecedented events the lamp of experience burned very dim and no man could walk always wisely amid strange surroundings. The only criticism of Mr. Welles which has retained some vitality is to the general effect that he showed some lack of what we have lately been taught to call the strenuous quality. Certainly he came less before the public than did the Secretary of State who aspired to be the power behind the President, or than the Secretary of the Treasury who desired to succeed the President, or than the Secretary of War whose functions as well as his methods of performing

them were almost preposterously spectacular and despotic. Mr. Welles had no political aspirations, was not courting popularity with any eye to the future, and made no effort to render his Department conspicuous or to have his administration of it lauded. Yet a comparison of the achievements of the Navy Department with the achievements of other departments is greatly in its favor. Neither Mr. Stanton in arming, clothing, and feeding the men gathered by the President's calls, nor Mr. Chase in printing greenbacks and selling bonds at the buyer's price, encountered a more novel task or found less material ready at hand for it than Mr. Welles met when he had rapidly to create a great blockading fleet, an efficient fighting fleet, and a fleet adapted for the peculiar service on the great rivers. It is a matter of regret that the Diary does not contain more on the subject of the Navy; and if this is due to lack of egotism, we would rather that he had not been so free from that rather petty blemish. Judgment of his administrative efficiency must still be made up about as it would have been before the publication of these volumes. For some reason, or without reason, people generally have paid insufficient attention to the naval side of the civil conflict, and are still slow to appreciate the fact which our historical writers begin of late to insist upon, that it was because the blockade strangled the Confederacy that the armies were able to slay it; nor is there even now, and perhaps there never will be, any adequate appreciation of the magnitude of that great enterprise or of the infinite difficulty in the details of its prolonged and perilous maintenance. A steady pressure to weaken its effectiveness came not only from selfish or knavish traders anxious to make money and backed by politicians, but also too often from the Foreign Department. Mr. Welles had to take a resolute stand not only against the ignoble money power with its political "pull," but occasionally even against Seward himself. It was Seward's inclination and to some extent his duty to regard conciliation somewhat more highly than firmness,

whereas Mr. Welles had to set achievement far above concession. Mr. Welles, early in his experience, noted irritably that Mr. Seward would probably get the better in a dispute of this kind because he would alarm the President by the "bugaboo" of a foreign war. It soon appeared, however, that Mr. Lincoln was little disturbed by bugaboos, and as force is the naturally powerful element in times of war, Mr. Welles was generally able to prevail over the more pacific and temporizing Secretary.

If the blockade lacked somewhat in the spectacular quality and in the condensation of the single great event, one need only turn to New Orleans and Vicksburg and above all to Mobile Bay, to have these defects abundantly supplied. Military strategy encountered no such novelty as the Merrimac, nor devised any such greater novelty as the Monitor, revolutionizing the practice of the world. Mr. Welles, of course, did not invent the Monitor, but he gave it a trial in spite of strenuous opposition on the part of "practical seamen." He did not command at Mobile Bay or elsewhere, any more than Mr. Stanton commanded at Gettysburg. It was not the business of these gentlemen to command; but it was their business to choose commanders, and in this Mr. Welles showed an ability in which the rival Department was sadly lacking; for, in the language of the turf, he was apt to "pick the winner," the most useful faculty which a Secretary of War or a Secretary of the Navy can have in time of war. He had singular sagacity in judging men; for he was observant, and could see the moral, mental, and temperamental material which lay stored away in one man or another. He had a like shrewdness in estimating situations, and in sifting the news and rumors of events; so that his forecasts were singularly accurate. For these reasons it was natural that, while the War Department was painfully learning on many a lost and bloody battlefield who could *not* command victory, the Navy Department sent well chosen captains from one success to another. For this it would be

unfair not to give the credit to Mr. Welles; and his Diary, without self-praise, indicates that he deserved it.

Like silver streaks through the somewhat rumpled and disordered surface of this Cabinet story run the reminiscences of Lincoln. Written of events presently occurring, or repeating words just spoken, the Diary tells such truth as the instantaneous photograph would tell before any retouching had been done by the artful photographer. Therefore no allowance has to be made for the influence of a prestige which was then only in the making and indeed was as yet somewhat dubious. Mr. Lincoln's ministers had no idea that he towered above them, and no one of them was at all overawed by him in those days. Presiding over them at the Cabinet, casually meeting them, chatting with them or lounging as was his habit in Stanton's room, Mr. Lincoln seemed only officially superior to them. One of them had expected to be President, and another meant to be, a third dared to be insolent and unruly; it seemed to be only by a chance of politics that these men stood to him as junior partners to a senior, or like a board of directors to the president of a corporation. Apotheosis had not taken place; Lincoln was not yet the victim of the commonplace orator, the favorite model for the Sunday-school teacher. Deification is a post-mortuary process, and efforts to bring it about prematurely are ill advised; a dead idol may be made secure upon a pedestal, but a living one is sure to slip off, lucky if it escapes with mutilation only, and not irreparable breakage. At the time of the writing of this Diary, Lincoln was not yet *divus;* when Mr. Chase said that to argue with him was as useless as to pour water on a duck's back, it was not blasphemy, as it would be to-day. When Mr. Seward posed as his tutor, it seemed to many persons not so much presumptuous as possibly fortunate; when Mr. Stanton was defiant, not a few were ready to say that it was lucky for the country that a too easy-going President had a masterful Secretary. The council of state was at least a heterogeneous, if not quite an ill-assorted, assemblage. Mr. Seward pro-

nounced it a "compound Cabinet," and did not mean to imply commendation. This Diary presents almost glaringly the wide difference between the conduct of public business and that of private business. A partnership wherein the partners should sustain to each other such relations as did these members of the national administration, a corporation with a board of directors so discordant and so jealous, would be in the bankruptcy court within a year or two. But in these vast competitions of the countries, results come slowly; nations have no relief in bankruptcy; their managers may snatch and squabble and blunder, according to their measure of brains and character, but all the while the people must keep on doing each day its daily business for its daily bread as best it can, paying the bills and facing the consequences, sure that it must always be governed somehow, and not over confident that a change would install a better set of governors. No one who has studied the history of our Civil War, and who is willing to speak plain truth will pretend that high and generous coöperation, honest dealing, and economic efficiency reached an epidemic prevalence. The splendid skill with which Lincoln held together and made useful the members of this "compound Cabinet" ought to be better appreciated hereafter, by reason of the divulgements by Mr. Welles. Washington tried the like experiment, but was not able to make it work permanently. He could not handle Hamilton and Jefferson in double harness. Lincoln, having a much harder task, succeeded with it. In a measure his success was due to the different character of the subordinate material; for of course there was not in Lincoln's Cabinet any one approaching the ability of Hamilton as a statesman or that of Jefferson as a politician. It was, however, much more due to a difference between the chiefs themselves, between Washington and Lincoln. Washington's power lay in a certain high and dignified attitude of supremacy; Lincoln's influence lay in patience, sagacity, tact, knowledge of human nature, and skill with the indi-

vidual. For example, history has no instance of a situation more difficult or of an extrication more brilliant than was presented when, in December, 1862, the committee of Republican Senators waited upon Mr. Lincoln with a demand for Mr. Seward's removal. Seward, forewarned, had already hastened to resign; a day or two later Lincoln, with a deftness like the feat of a juggler, secured Chase's resignation also. "Now I can ride," said the President; and he did ride. It was characteristic that in this critical hour Stanton, unhampered by loyalty, was on the point of making the confusion worse by adding his resignation; but Mr. Welles rebuked him and stood gallantly by the President. Nor was it the only instance when, in time of stress, the Secretary of the Navy was found a clear-headed, firm, and trustworthy supporter of his harassed principal. He played a like part in the matter of the occult move for displacing McClellan, when what was perhaps the right thing was undertaken in what was certainly the wrong way. At that time it was largely by reason of the refusal of Mr. Welles to participate that the President was saved from being placed in a very annoying position. This loyalty and trustworthiness of the Secretary Mr. Lincoln well appreciated, and in his turn upheld Mr. Welles in times of need or controversy; notably when Mr. Stanton arrogantly claimed the right to dominate the Navy Department and insisted that commanders of vessels on the rivers should take orders from commanders of the army on land. Mr. Lincoln made short work of this theory. It is reassuring to find these two shrewd judges of character entertaining such reciprocal esteem; and the opinion of each was a compliment to the other.

If this Diary had not covered the period of the Civil War, it would probably never have been published. Yet so far as furnishing valuable matter for the historian goes, it is even more useful for the four succeeding years; and the reason is not far to seek. From the exciting times of war

under Mr. Lincoln, to the wearisome days of Reconstruction under Mr. Johnson, was a transition at once swift and striking. If no other administration since the birth of the United States has made history which has been read with such absorbing interest as that of the earlier of these two administrations, so probably no other period has been so shunned as has the second by all readers who are not quite students; and there is abundant explanation why this should be so. Wranglings carried on by politicians in Congress, sometimes with legal arguments and always with extravagant abuse, were not very exhilarating after the intense days of mortal conflict by land and sea. The new scene seemed rather ignoble by contrast with that which had passed. During the War there had been certainly a painful display of corruption, self-seeking, inefficiency, and disloyalty on the part of a much too numerous minority; but these were faults in the superstructure; the basic multitude of the people, and a large proportion of their civilian leaders, had made a very fine and inspiring exhibition of enduring resolution and honest patriotism. To what events and to how many persons can one turn, during Johnson's régime, with any other feelings than dismay, humiliation, and disgust? To no events, and to only a few persons, in good truth!

For a little while after Mr. Johnson became President there was promise of reasonably harmonious, intelligent, and even creditable action in the matter of Reconstruction. But differences of opinion and purpose, which were profound, soon developed, and thereupon the outcry of dispute, which was not prevented from being tedious because it was acrimonious, became such that for the American of to-day the narration of those angry discussions seems the arid Sahara in our national history. A condition never contemplated by the framers of the Constitution had to be disposed of in pretended accordance with an instrument which had not a word to say concerning such problems. It followed that every one was at liberty to assert the law in

the premises according to his own view of what was desirable; and advantage of this privilege was liberally taken. On the one hand there was the theory that the Southern area was no longer an aggregation of sovereign States, but had become conquered territory to be reorganized, geographically and politically, as the victors might choose. On the other hand, it seemed severely logical to say that the North had fought to prove, and by success had proved, that States could never withdraw from the Union; wherefore they continued to be States after Lee's surrender just as much as they had been before invalid votes had undertaken to effect an unlawful secession. Upon these trunk views there sprouted many variations, big and little, like branches and twigs upon two great trees. The unfortunate part of it was the influence upon popular feeling, in some degree at the North, and in a greater degree at the South. For the contestants worked themselves into a mad fury about the business; and many who had remained at a safe distance from battlefields now indulged a rage which made up in savageness of feeling for the absence of danger. Evidently men could become much more excited when they were shouting adjectives than when they were shooting bullets, and Congress, impelled by the demagogues, took action which brought law-making into temporary disrepute.

Apart from the technical disputations of would-be jurists, really important considerations were advanced upon both sides. Arguments for rubbing out the old State lines, with their dangerous allegiances, faced arguments for retaining traditional sentiment and familiar obligations; demands, too natural to be called vindictive, for requiring formal avowals of error and penitence were met by suggestions of the wisdom as well as the generosity of conciliation. Who could say which would prove the better way in the greater number of cases, when treatment which would be effective with one individual would be ineffective with his neighbor? One thing only can now be surely alleged,

and that is that a prompt and decisive adoption of any plan would have been better than the prolonged wranglings which wearied, discouraged, and above all embittered nearly every man in the land.

President Johnson and Mr. Welles were naturally led by both intellectual and temperamental influences to resolve in much the same way those political questions which had now to be answered. So far as there is material for inferring what would have been Mr. Lincoln's position, there seems a strong probability that he would have ranged himself with them, or at least not far apart from them. Of late, also, as passion has very slowly cooled and personal prejudices have at last almost ceased to control judgment, students of a later generation are finding much to commend in the policy of Andrew Johnson. Commendation of his policy, however, is not apt to be accompanied with any moderation of the condemnatory attitude towards himself. On the contrary, his personal unpopularity and his abundant indiscretions are charged with the responsibility of aggravating the seriousness of the situation far beyond what was necessary. Yet, in fact, the clash was inevitable, the opposite opinions had their foundation in the two great divisions which send one half of mankind into the radical camp and the other half into the conservative; and in the situation and the problem then at hand there were present in an exceptional degree precisely those elements which rouse into activity alike the radical and the conservative spirit. In fact the conflict of parties at the North after the War could have been just as surely predicted as the preliminary conflict between the North and the South.

In Mr. Welles there was nothing of the radical; his sound good sense held him at a safe distance from extremism; therefore, so soon as we find him applying the word "radical" to a section of the Republican Party, we know that a schism betwixt them and him is at hand. Such was the case, and when Mr. Welles, like all the rest of the coun-

try, was swept into the fray, he no longer found at his side many with whom during recent years he had maintained a hearty political alliance. What had happened before the War was about to happen after it; that is to say, new questions were bringing about a new alignment. The Republican Party could not keep the allegiance of all those who had adhered to it faithfully during and even before the War. But the prestige of the party name was so great that whichever section could hold possession of that name and preserve an appearance of political continuity was sure to prevail. As was altogether natural in days of such excitement, this advantage fell into the scale of the extremists, who conducted their campaign with a violence that has never been surpassed, rarely has been equalled, in political struggles. Erelong the situation was that Thaddeus Stevens and Benjamin F. Butler gave orders to the Radicals, that the Radicals controlled the Republican Party, and the Republican Party governed the country. Against these forces a President and Cabinet, Republican also, but outnumbered and outshouted in their own camp, were reduced to obstructing, thwarting, and delaying measures which were sure ultimately to be carried. By all precedents such a conflict in the political family was sure to be most bitter, and such it soon became, and the spirit which thus painfully characterized it soon makes itself felt in the changed note of the Diary. Thus far there has been strong, pungent, decisive writing, but never immoderate; now we drift into that somewhat rotund and dignified style of denunciation, which already in those days was getting the flavor known as "of the old school." With alarming adjectives and damnatory phraseology the most villainous motives are suggested, wicked schemes are shadowed forth, and awful consequences are foretold. Reading these things, we should despair of the Republic, did we not happily know that it is still doing quite well, though how it escaped from such a pirates' cave we cannot quite see. Since, however, we have the comforting

knowledge that the escape has been successfully effected, we feel free to give a large measure of approval and sympathy, at least to the substance of what we read. When Mr. Welles assumed the rôle of a constitutional jurist he was far sounder than were his antagonists; it is true that the practical efficiency of the policies which he would have approved was not brought to the test of trial, but on the other hand it is certain that the policies which he disapproved made no gratifying record; moreover, the lash of his castigation fell generally upon backs which we are willing to see wince.

It has been remarked that it is especially the light thrown by this Diary upon individuals which we find interesting, and in this respect this second part, so to designate it, is even better than the first. The picture of Andrew Johnson is altogether the most favorable which has ever been given, at least with any authority, of that unfortunate man. It deserves to be studied with great interest, for, as has been said, Mr. Welles was a very shrewd and very fair judge of men. He had a high esteem for Johnson, which was not only the loyalty of an office-holder towards his chief, but was also a sincere esteem and genuine personal liking. It is safe to assume that the excited partisanship of the times somewhat stimulated these sentiments; yet he was not thus prevented from often criticizing his leader, and he seems in the main even-minded and judicious. It may be that the publication of these volumes will lead to at least a partial revision of popular opinion concerning our only impeached President.

Very much is said of General Grant and this also will be read eagerly, and is of the greatest value. Not often is any one man great in war and great in peace, and the reader of these pages will see plainly enough that there was no real reason for expecting General Grant to achieve better than the imperfect success which he did in the Presidency. Nowhere else has it been more clearly shown how little there was of the politician in his nature, and how easily he

could be ensnarled by unworthy schemers. The incidents narrated in the Diary, while showing many of his fine qualities, also betray his limitations and his failings; and there is one scene, between Grant and Johnson, which certainly ought not to have been suppressed, yet which cannot be read without great regret and pain. On the whole, it is probable that most readers will find Grant not much fallen in their esteem, though he was far from conducting himself to Mr. Welles's satisfaction. It is only statues which are made wholly of marble; the original hero is usually more or less patched with clay.

Charles Sumner and Mr. Welles, honest and earnest men of New England, coevals, and accustomed alike to the conflicts and to the self-control of public life, were able to meet, seem indeed to have liked to meet, in these anxious days, and discuss their widely divergent views. The Diary contains some very interesting reports of their talkings in the earlier stages when the different positions were being established. Agreeing in little, they came most directly into opposition upon the matter of giving to ex-slaves the right of suffrage. History would have no higher function than the mere gratification of curiosity if it did not show to us the more remote as well as the proximate results of human action, and so enable us to draw those far-reaching conclusions which are as oil for the lamp of experience. Now by what history shows as resulting from the gift of the suffrage made to the negro after the War, it would appear that no more evil donation was ever made by men. A useless teaching this, it may be said, since it cannot be imagined that any question at all resembling that one will ever again demand settlement. Perhaps this is true; but a far broader lesson, which is very old yet not antiquated, very familiar yet not needless, receives hereby a striking illustration, to wit: that when short-sighted mortals undertake to bring about a good thing by doing a wrong one, they easily make sure of the wrong, and very often lose the good. If a negro leader could then have arisen

to speak for his race and say: "No, we decline this tempting, dangerous gift until we shall be able to use it wisely and hold it firmly," he would have been the most far-seeing mortal of whom we have any knowledge. The kindness was as if one should put money in the hands of a little child and bid him fare forth to care for himself in the crowds of city streets. Will he not promptly be decoyed, beaten, robbed, and subjected to pains such as he never would have known had he not been so foolishly endowed? There were many motives for the act. Some persons were vindictive; what a bitter dose they would make the Southerner take! Some were really negrophiles, and honestly, though shortsightedly, fancied that the negro would have, in his vote, a weapon of self-defense and a means of making himself respected. But of course the politicians, who really carried the measure through, did so because it would insure a South as solidly Republican for some years to come — for as many years as they personally cared about — as it had been solidly Democratic in years past. Just here Mr. Welles saw, and Mr. Sumner could not see, the moral wrong. Was it not just as immoral and dishonest to obtain a majority by calling these poor ignorant field hands "voters" and then counting their so-called "votes" as by counting knavish fellows whose ballots were marketable like apples? Was the "worker" who led these benighted creatures from the rice swamp or the cotton field to the polls and bid them put a certain slip of paper into the box really entitled to a clearer conscience than the "heeler" who slipped a dollar bill into an itching palm in a factory or a bar-room? To what greater strain was it possible to subject American "free institutions" than to pour into them this awful flood of unfitness? And how great was the responsibility to the country, even to mankind, in risking the bringing of such discredit upon the new American experiment! Mr. Welles had the intelligence and foresight to condemn the mischievous scheme; he declared it to be at once unconstitutional and ill-ad-

vised; but Mr. Sumner, with the courage of fanaticism, was ready for the responsibility, while Stevens and Butler hardly knew what the word responsibility meant.

As the immediate outcome of Republican success in this business, there ensued the two or three years of negro supremacy in the Southern States and the riot of ignorant and vicious legislation. The spectacle was so shocking that historians rarely draw it with vivid or minute accuracy; it has been hidden away out of sight, and constitutes the only really suppressed chapter in American history. The only relief was that excesses which would soon have put an end to government itself were transitory; to-day, however, we are still living among the deferred but more serious and permanent conditions which enable us to judge whether the Secretary or the Senator was arguing on the right side of the controversy. Of course it can never be known what results would have been worked out by such measures as President Johnson and Mr. Welles would have devised. That is necessarily mere matter of speculation, and when we write the word IF, we open the door through which imagination can pass into anarchic freedom. We have, however, Mr. Welles's word for it that he would by no means have withheld the vote from negroes as such; that he thought them as fit for the franchise as were the immigrant hordes; but that taken in bulk he did not think either the one or the other mass was fit for it. Now, taking the privilege of the word, *if* the franchise had been offered to each individual negro so soon as, but only so soon as, he should give fair evidence of his competency to exercise it intelligently, would there not probably have been a steady advancement, yet so gradual that the "negro question" would not be the difficult and cruel problem which it is to-day? The truth was that the Radicals of the Johnson days were really thinking of votes, and were only talking of negroes. Mr. Welles set aside temporary political expediency, and stood for good sense and sound morality.

Of course in the Andrew Johnson drama the spectacular act is the impeachment. Americans who so lately had been holding their breath as they watched the great struggle waged by Grant and Sherman against Robert E. Lee, now had to watch with more painful feelings the assault of Benjamin F. Butler and Thaddeus Stevens against the President of the United States. It is indeed to "look here upon this picture, and on this!" Fain would all citizens of this land bury out of sight and memory the shame of that endeavor, so discreditable in conception and purpose, so disgraceful in conduct and conclusion. But the chapter got itself written and every one must read it. This Diary furnishes us our best, practically our only, opportunity to see the interior of the defendant's council-chamber; and it is interesting to do so. By this time Mr. Welles had become pessimistic; to him evil and destruction seemed to pervade the air; darkness was around him, and apprehension, while the fate of his country was trembling in the balance not less dubiously and much more ignobly than when triumphant Southern troops were marching into Pennsylvania. He considers what is to be done in the anticipated event of an attempt to arrest the President before trial, or even of an effort to depose him. Is General Grant to be trusted? Would it be possible to turn to Sherman to oppose Grant, in case of the ultimate emergency? Wild fancies and improbable terrors perturbed the staunch little band of the President's friends. To us now these seem the phantoms of panic; but we know not the unrealized possibilities of those days. Even for us, merely reading a bit of history, there is not much gratification in thinking that in the end the nation was saved from the infinite disgrace of a verdict of conviction only because in the great body of her legislators a corporal's guard of Republicans could be found with the courage and the honesty to assert their political independence. That we are obliged to rejoice over so narrow a salvation of the national honor is in itself hardly honorable.

After this great struggle passed, lassitude ensued; there was not much for either side to do now save to wait, to drag through the tedious months which yet remained of Johnson's term. The end came of course at noon on March 4, 1869, when General Grant advanced to take his turn at the difficult task, then so exceptionally difficult, of ruling the country, healing the still stinging wounds, and pleasing the people. With all his popularity and prestige he did not find that his plough was set for an easy furrow. On March 17, 1869, Mr. Welles "parted with ex-President Johnson and family," and he writes in his Diary that "no better persons have occupied the Executive Mansion, and I part from them, socially and personally, with sincere regret." A month later he took his own departure with "reluctance." At his age the change signified, of course, that activities were over, and that during his remaining years he must watch rather than share in the interesting toil and struggle of life. Apart from this reflection the removal from the capital brought also the curtailment of pleasures which had meant much to him. He had an inborn taste for what we call "Society," and he was well fitted to play a prominent and effective part in it. In point of personal appearance Nature had dealt kindly by him. Mr. Seward's intellectual greatness was certainly inadequately expressed by his wizened face and ordinary form. Mr. Chase's stately deportment, on the other hand, was such an exaggeration of Jovian grandeur as seemed to outrun severe good taste. Mr. Stanton was the incarnation of the *bourgeoisie* in its American type. From much better endowed rivals Mr. Welles would easily have carried off the honors of the dignified and handsome gentleman of the official circle. He was complacently aware of these advantages of features, form, and manner, and did not neglect their due cultivation. At that time, it is true, Washington was by no means the beautiful city which the lavish profusion of "boss" Shepherd soon afterward made it, and it was only beginning to attract the rich and varied throng which now fills it

every winter. It was then only the place where the nation's business was done; yet even thus it had a numerous and ever changing society of able, interesting, noteworthy men with whom it was most agreeable to mingle. All this life Mr. Welles had thoroughly appreciated, and it could hardly be altogether gratifying to pack his household goods and gods for flight to a Connecticut town. It was natural that on the eve of this flitting he should write gravely, almost sadly. Yet one would think that there must have been some sense of relief at closing such a service as that which he had been rendering to Mr. Johnson. It would have been bad enough to be engaged in conducting even a successful grapple with men who fought after the fashion adopted by Stevens and Butler and their followers; but to have been constantly forced backward, kept upon the defensive, harried and assailed by such men had been a severe test of temper and constancy. It must have been courage and honor and duty that had made Mr. Welles endure to the end, as he did with unflinching spirit, and he was well entitled to write that his duties had been "honestly and fearlessly discharged"; posterity will add also "honorably and efficiently." However his feelings may have been mingled between a consciousness of loss and of relief, his sound good sense told him that it was "best that the brief span of life that remains to me should be passed in the land of my nativity." Thither accordingly he went, man fashion, without repining, and found such occupation as he could in literary work, chiefly for magazines. He died at Hartford, February 11, 1878. We bid him farewell with respect for him as a distinguished public servant and with good will towards him as an upright man; neither can we neglect to say that all the good service which he rendered to his contemporaries was not of greater value than the legacy which he left to posterity in this invaluable Diary.

JOHN T. MORSE, JR.

DIARY OF GIDEON WELLES

VOLUME I

1861—MARCH 30, 1864

DIARY OF GIDEON WELLES

1861 — MARCH 30, 1864

I

THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR[1]

The Expedition for the Relief of Sumter — Mr. Seward's Interference — Porter and Barron — The Relief of Fort Pickens — Conversation with Senator Douglas — Mr. Seward's Intrigues — The Loss of the Norfolk Navy Yard — The Appointment of Stanton as Secretary of War — The Relations of Seward and Stanton — Fear of the Merrimac in Washington — "Stanton's Navy."

On the 6th of March, 1861, two days after the inauguration of President Lincoln, Secretary Holt, who continued to discharge the duties of Secretary of War, Mr. Cameron not being prepared to enter at once upon the duties, called at the Navy Department with the compliments of General Scott and requested my attendance at the War Department on matters of special importance. I went immediately with him to the office of the Secretary of War, where were Generals Scott and Totten, and I think Secretary Cameron, and perhaps one or two others.

General Scott commenced with a statement of the perilous condition of the country and of the difficulties and embarrassments he had experienced for months past; related the measures and precautions he had taken for the public safety, the advice and admonitions he had given

[1] This first chapter is not a part of Mr. Welles's diary, having been written several years after the events narrated, but since it gives a vivid first-hand account of these events, which occurred before the actual diary was begun, it may properly be considered a part of the record.

President Buchanan, which, however, had been disregarded, and, finally, his apprehensions, perhaps convictions, that hostilities were imminent and, he feared, inevitable. He had, with the knowledge of Secretary Holt, taken the responsibility of ordering a small military force to Washington for the protection of the government and the public property and archives, and other troops were on their way from the West. His statement was full, clear in its details, and of absorbing interest to those of us who were to meet and provide for the conflict now at hand. Among other matters, and that for which he had especially requested our attendance that morning, was certain intelligence of a distressing character from Major Anderson at Fort Sumter, stating that his supplies were almost exhausted, that he could get no provisions in Charleston, and that he with his small command would be wholly destitute in about six weeks. Under these circumstances it became a question what action should be taken, and for that purpose, as well as to advise us of the condition of affairs, he had convened the gentlemen present.

The information was to most of us unexpected and astounding, and there was, on the part of such of us as had no previous intimation of the condition of things at Sumter, an earnest determination to take immediate and efficient measures to relieve and reinforce the garrison. But General Scott, without opposing this spontaneous resolution, related the difficulties which had already taken place, and stated the formidable obstacles which were to be encountered from the numerous and well-manned batteries that were erected in Charleston Harbor. Any successful attempt to reinforce or relieve the garrison by sea he supposed impracticable. An attempt had already been made and failed. The question was, however, one for naval authorities to decide, for the army could do nothing. Commander Ward, a gallant officer, had tendered his services on a former occasion when the subject was considered, and was ready at any time to take command of an expedition,

if one were ordered. General Scott said he did not expect any conclusion would be arrived at, at this meeting. He had called the gentlemen together by direction of the President to communicate what information he had, and was glad to have his mind relieved of overburthened care and responsibility with which it had been loaded for months. He especially requested me to consult with naval men, and had thought it advisable that Commander Ward, then on the receiving-ship at Brooklyn, should come to Washington, as he had already been made somewhat familiar with the subject.

The meeting adjourned with an understanding that we would come together on the following day at the Executive Mansion. In the mean time the gentlemen were to give the subject earnest consideration.

When we met on the succeeding day, the same gentlemen, with the exception of Judge Holt, were present, and there were two or three others, beside the President.

Many of the naval officers then in Washington and about the Navy Department were of questionable fidelity. A number had already resigned and most of those who were tainted with secession soon left the service; but some of them, on a further consideration of the subject, aided perhaps by adventitious circumstances, determined to abide by the flag and the Union. Whilst there were doubts and uncertainty on every hand as to who could be trusted, I knew Commodore Stringham to be faithful, and therefore had, with the concurrence of the President, selected him to assist me in matters of detail. With him I communicated freely and fully in regard to the condition of Sumter and the ability of the Navy to throw in supplies for its relief. Both he and Commander Ward were confident that the Navy could reinforce the garrison and furnish it with men and provisions. The President had been apprised of the condition of things at Sumter, on the 4th of March, and had referred the subject to General Scott for advice, with directions to consult the Secretaries of War and Navy.

Some, but not a very lengthened, discussion took place at this first interview at the Executive Mansion. There was a very general and very determined opinion expressed that Fort Sumter ought to be and should be reinforced. Major Anderson and all the officers of the garrison expressed in a measure the professional opinion that reinforcements could not be thrown into the fort in time for their relief with a force of less than twenty thousand good and well-disciplined men. Generals Scott and Totten declared it was impracticable, and Mr. Seward, who made many suggestions and inquiries, had doubts, and was evidently wholly opposed to any attempt at relief.

No conclusion was required or expected at this interview. The President then, and until decisive steps were finally taken, was averse to offensive measures, and anxious to avoid them. In council, and in personal interviews with myself and others, he enjoined upon each and all to forbear giving any cause of offense; and as regarded party changes consequent upon a change of administration, while they would necessarily be made elsewhere, he wished no removal for political causes to be made in the Southern States, and especially not in Virginia. Although disturbed by the fact that the supplies of the garrison at Sumter were so limited, he was disinclined to hasty action, and wished time for the Administration to get in working order and its policy to be understood. He desired, I think on the suggestion of Mr. Seward, that General Scott should prepare a statement of the position of Sumter, and of the other batteries, and of preparations in Charleston and Charleston Harbor, — the strength of each, how far and long could the garrison maintain itself and repel an attack if made, what force would be necessary to overcome any rebel force or organized military of the State of South Carolina, should she bid defiance to and resist the Federal authorities.

No regular Cabinet-meetings were held in these days, nor for several weeks subsequently, but the heads of Departments were frequently convened, always by special

summons through the Secretary of State. Sometimes there was not a full attendance, but on such occasions when there was an omission to invite any members, the absentees were considered not particularly interested in the questions submitted, or the questions did not affect the unrepresented Departments.

The Secretary of State was, of course, apprised of every meeting and never failed in his attendance, whatever was the subject-matter, and though entirely out of his official province. He was vigilantly attentive to every measure and movement in other Departments, however trivial, — as much so as to his own, — watched and scrutinized every appointment that was made or proposed to be made, but was not communicative in regard to the transactions of the State Department. Other members began to interchange views on these proceedings by which one of the heads of Departments was exclusively apprised on all measures, and at length Mr. Chase, as the second in rank and by request of his associates, inquired at one of the special meetings, whether it had not been usual in past administrations to have regular Cabinet-meetings on stated days of each week, and if it would not be conducive to unity and efficiency were the Administration to conform to past usage in that respect.

Mr. Seward very promptly replied that it was not advisable to consume the time of all the gentlemen on stated days and when perhaps it would be unnecessary. The President had only to send word to the State Department, at any time, day or night, when he wanted to call his Cabinet together, or any portion of them, and he, Seward, would take upon himself to have every member notified whose attendance was required. The times were such, he remarked, that the President might find it necessary to call them, or portions of them, frequently, perhaps daily, and even oftener, together, for consultation.

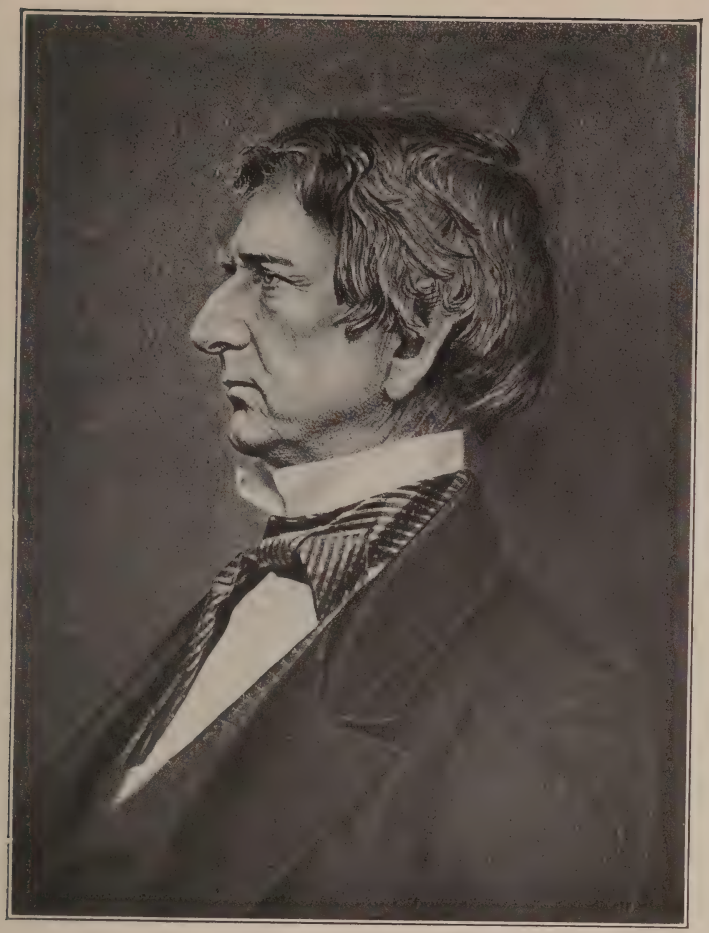
It was said on the other hand, by all the members except Mr. Seward, that the stated meetings need not prevent

special calls whenever the President deemed proper, and that it was advisable, for the sake of unity and efficacy, that all the members should attend these meetings and share in the responsibility, instead of having partial gatherings.

The President concurred in these views of the majority, and it was decided that thereafter the Cabinet should assemble at meridian on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Commander Ward, who was summoned to Washington, expressed his readiness to receive orders and to carry supplies to Sumter. He had volunteered to perform this service to the late administration, but his offer was then declined. There was a belief at that time that the garrison could not be reinforced by the Navy, and to attempt it would, President Buchanan feared, bring on hostilities. This in substance was the report of Commander Ward to me. I called with him on General Scott, who I then perceived was now decidedly opposed to any attempt to relieve Major Anderson. The Navy he was confident could not do it, and an army of at least twenty thousand men would be necessary, he said, to effect it. We had no such army, and the Government could not collect and arm one, to say nothing of the discipline and training, before the garrison would starve. Commander Ward and also Commodore Stringham at first thought that a supply of provisions and a small number of men might be thrown into the fort by means of two small fast tugs, which could run in in the night. Even if one of the tugs was lost, which they did not believe would be the case, the other could relieve the garrison. Of course, the tugs would be abandoned after landing the men, each one of whom was to have his sack of provisions if they could land no more. The crews of the tugs as well as the small additional military force would join the garrison and share its fate.

In subsequent interviews with Generals Scott and Totten, Commander Ward became less confident and was finally convinced that relief was impracticable. He advised



WILLIAM H. SEWARD

me that the scheme should be abandoned. Commodore Stringham came ultimately but reluctantly to the same conclusion, after the elaborate report of the two generals, who maintained that if supplies could be furnished the garrison, the fort itself could not hold out against the attack of the surrounding batteries which the Secessionists had been allowed to erect and fortify for the reduction of Sumter.

Mr. Seward, who from the first had viewed with no favor any attempt to relieve Sumter, soon became a very decisive and emphatic opponent of any proposition that was made; said he had entertained doubts, and the opinions and arguments of Major Anderson and his officers, confirmed by the distinguished military officers who were consulted, had fully convinced him that it would be abortive and useless. It was a duty to defer to these military gentlemen, whose profession and study made them experts, who had by long and faithful service justly acquired the positions they held, and who possessed the confidence of the country. It was, he was satisfied, impossible to relieve and reinforce the garrison; the attempt would provoke immediate hostilities, and if hostilities could not be avoided, he deemed it important that the Administration should not strike the first blow.

The President, though much distressed with the conclusions of the military officers, and the decisive concurrence of the Secretary of State in those conclusions, appeared to acquiesce in what seemed to be a military necessity, but was not disposed to yield until the last moment, and when there was no hope of accomplishing the work if attempted. In the mean time, he sent Mr. Lamon, his late law-partner, to Charleston and others also to make inquiries, among them Mr. Fox, who, like Commander Ward, had been a volunteer under the late administration to relieve Sumter and who never abandoned the idea of its practicability.

Commander Ward was so fully convinced by the argu-

ments of General Scott and General Totten and the opinions of the officers of the garrison, so dissuaded by the opposition of Mr. Seward and the general current of views which prevailed, that he wholly abandoned the project, stating, however, that he held himself in readiness to obey orders and take charge of an expedition, if the Government should at any time deem it expedient that an effort should be made. On the 11th of March he left Washington, and returned to New York.

A strange state of things existed at that time in Washington. The atmosphere was thick with treason. Party spirit and old party differences prevailed, however, amidst these accumulating dangers. Secession was considered by most persons as a political party question, not as rebellion. Democrats to a large extent sympathized with the Rebels more than with the Administration, which they opposed, not that they wished secession to be successful and the Union divided, but they hoped that President Lincoln and the Republicans would, overwhelmed by obstacles and embarrassments, prove failures. The Republicans, on the other hand, were scarcely less partisan and unreasonable. Crowds of them at this period, when the storm of civil war was about bursting on the country, thronged the anterooms of the President and Secretaries, clamorous for the removal of all Democrats, indiscriminately, from office. Patriotism was with them no test, no shield from party malevolence. They demanded the proscription and exclusion of such Democrats as opposed the Rebel movements and clung to the Union, with the same vehemence that they demanded the removal of the worst Rebels who advocated a dissolution of the Union.

Neither party appeared to be apprehensive of or to realize the gathering storm. There was a general belief, indulged in by most persons, that an adjustment would in some way be brought about, without any extensive resort to extreme measures. It seemed probable there might be some outbreak in South Carolina, and perhaps in one or

two other places, but such would, it was believed, be soon and easily suppressed. The threatened violence which the nullifiers had thundered for thirty years in the ears of the people had caused their threats to be considered as the harmless ebullitions of excited demagogues throughout the North, while at the South those utterances had so trained the Southern mind, and fired the Southern heart, as to cause them to be received as truthful. The South were, therefore, more united and earnest at this crisis, more determined on seceding, than either the Democrats or Republicans supposed. But, while the great body of the people and most of their leaders in the Northern States, listening to the ninety-day prophecies of Mr. Seward, were incredulous as to any extensive, serious disturbance, there were not a few whose forebodings were grave and sad. All the calamities which soon befell the country these men anticipated. Yet such as were in positions of responsibility would not permit themselves to despond, or despair of the Republic. Mr. Seward possessed a hopeful and buoyant spirit which did not fail him in that dark period, and at no time were his party feelings more decided than during the spring of 1861. Old Whig associates he clung to and strove to retain. All Democrats he distrusted, unless they became identified with the Republican Party. He had probably overestimated his own power and ability to allay the rising storm, and had not the personal influence he supposed. He had prophesied during the winter peace and harmony, within a very brief period after the change of administration was to be effected. These unfortunate prophecies, which became a matter of mirth with many of his friends and of ridicule among his opponents, were not entirely vain imaginings or without some foundation. In the confident belief that he could, if once in place and power, effect conciliation and peace, it had been an object with him to tide the difficulties past the 4th of March. He therefore had operated to that end, and so had Mr. Buchanan, though for different reasons.

Through Mr. Stanton, after that gentleman entered Mr. Buchanan's Cabinet, Mr. Seward and others were secretly advised in regard to the important measures of the Buchanan Administration, and in the course of the winter Mr. Seward came to an understanding, as was alleged and as events and circumstances indicated, with certain of the leading Secessionists. Among other things it was asserted that an agreement had been entered into that no assault should be made on Fort Sumter, provided the garrison should not be reinforced. Mr. Buchanan was to observe the status thus understood during the short remaining period of his administration, and Mr. Seward, as the coming premier, was, on the change of administration, to carry forward the policy of non-reinforcement of Sumter. If not supplied or reinforced, famine would certainly effect the downfall of the fortress without bloodshed on either side. Until blood was spilled, there was hope of conciliation. In fulfillment of this arrangement, Mr. Seward opposed any and every scheme to reinforce Sumter, and General Scott, who was old and much under his influence, if not a party to the understanding, seconded or took a leading part in that opposition.

On the 5th of March commissioners from the Rebel Government arrived in Washington and soon put themselves in communication with the Secretary of State, but the specific object which they had in view, and the negotiations or understanding between him and the parties were not immediately detailed to the Cabinet. They undoubtedly influenced the mind and course of Mr. Seward, who did not relinquish the hope of a peaceful adjustment of difficulties, and he in conversation continued to allure his friends with the belief that he should be able to effect a reconciliation.

In the many, almost daily, discussions which for a time were held in regard to Sumter, the opposition to forwarding supplies gathered strength. Commodore Stringham, as well as Commander Ward, on a final application which

I made to him, by request of the President, and finally by the President himself, said he was compelled to advise against it. The time had gone by. It was too late. The military gentlemen had satisfied him it was impossible, that nothing could be gained by it, were the attempt made, that it would be attended with a useless sacrifice of blood and treasure, and he felt constrained to state his belief of the inability of the Navy to give relief.

Postmaster-General Blair, who had been a close and near observer of what had taken place through the winter and spring, took an opposite view from Mr. Seward and General Scott. To some extent he was aware of the understanding which Mr. Seward had with the members of Buchanan's Administration, or was suspicious of it, and his indignation that any idea of abandoning Sumter should be entertained or thought of was unbounded. With the exception of Mr. Seward, all his colleagues concurred with Mr. Blair at the commencement, but as the subject was discussed, and the impossibility and inutility of the scheme was urged, with assurance from the first military men in the country, whose advice was sought and given, that it was a military necessity to leave Sumter to its fate, the opinions of men changed, or they began at least to waver. Mr. Blair saw these misgivings, in which he did not at all participate, and finally, observing that the President, with the acquiescence of the Cabinet, was about adopting the Seward and Scott policy, he wrote his resignation, determined not to continue in the Cabinet if no attempt were made to relieve Fort Sumter. Before handing in his resignation, a delay was made at the request of his father. The elder Blair sought an interview with the President, to whom he entered his protest against non-action, which he denounced as the offspring of intrigue. His earnestness and indignation aroused and electrified the President; and when, in his zeal, Blair warned the President that the abandonment of Sumter would be justly considered by the people, by the world, by history, as treason to the country,

he touched a chord that responded to his invocation. The President decided from that moment that an attempt should be made to convey supplies to Major Anderson, and that he would reinforce Sumter. This determination he communicated to the members of the Cabinet as he saw them, without a general announcement in Cabinet-meeting. The resolve inspired all the members with hope and courage, except Mr. Seward, who was evidently disappointed. He said it was of vastly more importance to turn our attention to Fort Pickens. I told him this had been done and how; that we had a considerable naval force there, almost the whole of the Home Squadron, and we had sent, a fortnight before, orders to land the troops under Captain Vogdes from the Brooklyn. He said that still more should, in his opinion, be done; that it was practicable to save Fort Pickens, but it was confessedly impossible to retain Sumter. One would be a waste of effort and energy and life, would extinguish all hope of peace, and compel the Government to take the initiative in hostile demonstrations, while the other would be an effective and peaceable movement. Although, as already mentioned, stated Cabinet-meetings were not then established, the members were in those early days of the Administration frequently together, and the President had every day more or less interviews with them, individually or collectively. The Secretary of State spent much of each day at the Executive Mansion and was vigilant to possess himself of every act, move, and intention of the President and of each of his associates. Perhaps there was an equal desire on their part to be informed of the proceedings of the Administration in full, but less was known of the transactions of the State Department than of any other.

The President, after his interview with the elder Blair, asked me if a naval expedition could be promptly fitted out to relieve Sumter. Mr. Fox,[1] who had in February proposed to the Buchanan Administration a plan for the

[1] Gustavus V. Fox, subsequently Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

relief of Sumter, again volunteered for the service, and was accepted by Mr. Lincoln. On the 19th of March he received the following communication from General Scott:

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
Washington, March 19, 1861.

DEAR SIR: In accordance with the request contained in a note from the Secretary of War to me, of which I annex a copy, I request that you will have the goodness to proceed to Charleston, S. C., and obtain permission, if necessary, to visit Fort Sumter, in order to enable you to comply with the wish expressed in the Secretary's note.

Please, on your return, to report accordingly.

I remain, with high consideration, your most obedient servant,

WINFIELD SCOTT.

G. V. FOX, ESQ.

Mr. Fox visited the fort and saw Major Anderson, and was confident he could reinforce the garrison with men and supply it with provisions. Commodore Stringham was tendered the command of the naval part of the expedition, but doubted the practicability of succeeding. The President, notwithstanding Stringham's reluctance, determined to accept the volunteer services of Mr. Fox, who, though then in no way connected with the Government, had formerly been an officer of the Navy. The object being the relief of a military garrison and the supplies and troops for reinforcement being from the army, the expedition was made a military and not a naval one, but with naval aid and coöperation. The transports which the War Department was to charter were to rendezvous off Charleston with the naval vessels, which would act as convoy, and render such assistance as would be required of them. The steam frigate Powhatan, which had returned from service in the West Indies and needed considerable repairs, had just arrived and been ordered out of commission, and the crew discharged the day before the final decision of the President was communicated. Dispatches were forthwith

sent revoking the orders which had been issued, directing that the Powhatan be again put in commission, and to fit her without delay for brief service. The Pawnee and one or two other vessels, including the Harriet Lane, a revenue cutter transferred to the Navy for the occasion, there not being sufficient naval vessels available for the expedition, were ordered to be in readiness for sea service on or before the 6th of April with one month's stores on board. These preparatory orders were given on the 30th of March.

On the 1st of April, while at my dinner at Willard's, where I then boarded, Mr. Nicolay, the private secretary of the President, brought to me and laid upon the table a large package from the President. It was between five and six o'clock in the afternoon when I received this package, which I immediately examined and found it contained several papers of a singular character, in the nature of instructions, or orders from the Executive in relation to naval matters, and one in reference to the government of the Navy Department more singular and remarkable than either of the others. This extraordinary document was as follows: —

(Confidential)

Executive Mansion, April 1, 1861.

To the Secretary of the Navy.

Dear Sir: You will issue instructions to Captain Pendergrast, commanding the home squadron, to remain in observation at Vera Cruz — important complications in our foreign relations rendering the presence of an officer of rank there of great importance.

Captain Stringham will be directed to proceed to Pensacola with all possible despatch, and assume command of that portion of the home squadron stationed off Pensacola. He will have confidential instructions to coöperate in every way with the commanders of the land forces of the United States in that neighborhood.

The instructions to the army officers, which are strictly confidential, will be communicated to Captain Stringham after he arrives at Pensacola.

Captain Samuel Barron will relieve Captain Stringham in charge of the Bureau of Detail.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

P. S. As it is very necessary at this time to have a perfect knowledge of the personal of the navy, and to be able to detail such officers for special purposes as the exigencies of the service may require, I request that you will instruct Captain Barron to proceed and organize the Bureau of Detail in the manner best adapted to meet the wants of the navy, taking cognizance of the discipline of the navy generally, detailing all officers for duty, taking charge of the recruiting of seamen, supervising charges made against officers, and all matters relating to duties which must be best understood by a sea officer. You will please afford Captain Barron any facility for accomplishing this duty, transferring to his department the clerical force heretofore used for the purposes specified. It is to be understood that this officer will act by authority of the Secretary of the Navy, who will exercise such supervision as he may deem necessary.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Without a moment's delay I went to the President with the package in my hand. He was alone in his office and, raising his head from the table at which he was writing, inquired, "*What have I done wrong?*" I informed him I had received with surprise the package containing his instructions respecting the Navy and the Navy Department, and I desired some explanation. I then called his attention particularly to the foregoing document, which I read to him. This letter was in the handwriting of Captain Meigs of the army, then Quartermaster-General; the postscript in that of David D. Porter, since made Vice-Admiral. The President expressed as much surprise as I felt, that he had sent me such a document. He said Mr. Seward, with two or three young men, had been there through the day on a subject which he (Seward) had in hand, and which he had been some time maturing; that it was Seward's specialty, to which he, the President, had yielded, but as it involved considerable details, he had left Mr. Seward

to prepare the necessary papers. These papers he had signed, many of them without reading, — for he had not time, and if he could not trust the Secretary of State, he knew not whom he could trust. I asked who were associated with Mr. Seward. "No one," said the President, "but these young men were here as clerks to write down his plans and orders." Most of the work was done, he said, in the other room. I then asked if he knew the young men. He said one was Captain Meigs, another was a naval officer named Porter.

I informed the President that I was not prepared to trust Captain Barron, who was by this singular proceeding, issued in his name, to be forced into personal and official intimacy with me. He said he knew nothing of Barron except he had a general recollection that there was such an officer in the Navy. The detailing officer of the Department, I said to him, ought to have the implicit confidence of the Secretary, and should be selected by him. This the President assented to most fully. I then told him that Barron, though a pliant gentleman, had not my confidence, and I thought him not entitled to that of the President in these times; that his associations, feelings, and views, so far as I had ascertained them, were with the Secessionists; that he belonged to a clique of exclusives, most of whom were tainted with secession notions; that, though I was not prepared to say he would desert us when the crisis came on, I was apprehensive of it, and while I would treat him kindly, considerately, and hoped he would not prove false like most others of his set, I could not give him the trust which the instructions imposed.

The President reiterated they were not his instructions, though signed by him, that the paper was an improper one, that he wished me to give it no more consideration than I thought proper, to treat it as canceled, or as if it had never been written. He said he remembered that both Seward and Porter had something to say about Barron, as if he was a superior officer, and in some respects, perhaps, with-

out any equal in the Navy, but he certainly never would have assigned him or any other man knowingly the position without consulting me.

Barron was a courtier, of mild and affable manners, a prominent and influential officer, especially influential with the clique which recognized him as a leader. He and D. D. Porter were intimate friends, and both were favorites of Jefferson Davis, Slidell, and other Secessionists, who, I had learned, paid them assiduous attention.

When I took charge of the Navy Department, I found great demoralization and defection among the naval officers. It was difficult to ascertain who among those that lingered about Washington could and who were not to be trusted. Some belonging to the Barron clique had already sent in their resignations. Others, it was well understood, were prepared to do so as soon as a blow was struck. Some were hesitating, undecided what step to take. Barron, Buchanan, Maury, Porter, and Magruder were in Washington, and each and all were, during that unhappy winter, courted and caressed by the Secessionists, who desired to win them to their cause. I was by reliable friends put on my guard as respected each of them. Buchanan, Maury, and Magruder were each holding prominent place and on duty. Barron was familiar with civil and naval matters, was prepared for any service, ready to be called to discharge such duties as are constantly arising in the Department, requiring the talents of an intelligent officer.

Porter had some of the qualities of Barron, with more dash and energy, was less plausible, more audacious, and careless in his statements, but like him was given to intrigues. His associations, as well as Barron's, during the winter of 1861, had been intimate with the Secessionists. He sought and obtained orders for Coast Survey service in the Pacific, which indicated an intention to avoid active participation in the approaching controversy. That class of officers who at such a time sought duties in the Pacific and on foreign stations were considered, *prima facie*, as in

sympathy with the Secessionists, but yet not prepared to give up their commissions and abandon the Government. No men were more fully aware that a conflict was impending, and that, if hostilities commenced and they were within the call of the Department, they would be required to participate. Hence a disposition to evade an unpleasant dilemma by going away was not misunderstood.

Barron and Porter occupied in the month of March an equivocal position. They were intimate, they were popular, and the eye of the Department was necessarily upon them, as it was, indeed, upon all in the service. In two or three interviews with me, Barron deprecated the unfortunate condition of the country, expressed his hopes that extreme measures would not be resorted to, avowed his love for the profession with which from early childhood he had been identified and in which so many of his family had distinguished connection. There were suavity in his manner and kindly sentiments in his remarks, but not that earnest, devoted patriotism which the times demanded, and which broke forth from others of his profession, in denunciation of treason and infidelity to the flag. Porter had presented himself but once to the Department, and that was to make some inquiries in relation to his orders to the Pacific, but there was no allusion to the impending difficulties nor any proffer of service if difficulties ensued. As with many others, some of whom abandoned the Government, while some remained and rendered valuable service, the Department was in doubt what course these two officers would pursue.

This was the state of the case when the instructions of the 1st of April were sent me. On learning from the President who were Mr. Seward's associates, I was satisfied that Porter had through him proposed and urged the substitution of Barron for Stringham as the detailing and confidential officer of the Secretary of the Navy. I was unwilling to believe that my colleague Mr. Seward could connive at, or be party to, so improper and gross an affair

as to interfere with the organization of my Department, and jeopardize its operations at such a juncture. What, then, were the contrivances which he was maturing with two young officers, one of the army and the other of the Navy, without consulting the Secretary of War or the Secretary of the Navy? What had he, the Secretary of State, to do with these officers in any respect? I could get no satisfactory explanation from the President of the origin of this strange interference, which mystified him, and which he censured and condemned more severely than myself. He assured me it would never occur again. Although very much disturbed by the disclosure, he was anxious to avoid difficulty, and, to shield Mr. Seward, took to himself the whole blame and repeatedly said that I must pay no more attention to the papers sent me than I thought advisable. He gave me, however, at that time no information of the scheme which Mr. Seward had promoted, farther than that it was a specialty, which Mr. Seward wished should be kept secret. I therefore pressed for no further disclosures.

The instructions in relation to Barron I treated as nullities. My first conclusions were that Mr. Seward had been made a victim to an intrigue, artfully contrived by those who favored and were promoting the Rebellion, and that the paper had been in some way surreptitiously introduced with others in the hurry and confusion of that busy day without his knowledge. That he would commit the discourtesy of imposing on me such instructions I was unwilling to believe, and that he should be instrumental in placing, or attempting to place, a person more than suspected, and who was occupying so equivocal a position as Barron, in so responsible a position in the Navy Department, and commit to him all the information of that branch of the Government, seemed to me impossible.

The preparations for the Sumter expedition were carried forward with all the energy which the Department could command, for we were notified the provisions of the garri-

son would be exhausted on the 15th of April. It was arranged by the War and Navy Departments that their forces — the naval vessels and transports — should meet and rendezvous ten miles due east of Charleston lighthouse on the morning of the 11th of April. Each of the vessels was to report to Capt. Samuel Mercer, commanding the Powhatan, and the following final instructions were sent to that officer: —

(Confidential)

Navy Department, April 5, 1861.

Captain Samuel Mercer, commanding U. S. Steamer Powhatan, N. Y.

The United States Steamers Powhatan, Pawnee, Pocahontas, and Harriet Lane will compose a naval force under your command, to be sent to the vicinity of Charleston, S. C., for the purpose of aiding in carrying out the objects of an expedition of which the War Department has charge.

The primary object of the expedition is to provision Fort Sumter, for which purpose the War Department will furnish the necessary transports. Should the authorities of Charleston permit the fort to be supplied, no further particular service will be required of the force under your command; and after being satisfied that supplies have been received at the fort, the Powhatan, Pocahontas, and Harriet Lane will return to New York, and the Pawnee to Washington.

Should the authorities at Charleston, however, refuse to permit, or attempt to prevent the vessel or vessels having supplies on board from entering the harbor, or from peaceably proceeding to Fort Sumter, you will protect the transports or boats of the expedition in the object of their mission, disposing of your force in such manner as to open the way for their ingress, and afford as far as practicable security to the men and boats, and repelling by force if necessary all obstructions toward provisioning the fort and reinforcing it; for in case of a resistance to the peaceable primary object of the expedition, a reinforcement of the garrison will also be attempted. These purposes will be under the supervision of the War Department, which has charge of the expedition. The expedition has been intrusted to Captain G. V. Fox, with whom you will put yourself in communication, and

coöperate with him to accomplish and carry into effect its object.

You will leave New York with the Powhatan in time to be off Charleston bar, ten miles distant from and due east of the light-house, on the morning of the 11th instant, there to await the arrival of the transport or transports with troops and stores. The Pawnee and Pocahontas will be ordered to join you there at the time mentioned, and also the Harriet Lane, which latter vessel has been placed under the control of this Department for this service.

On the termination of the expedition, whether it be peaceable or otherwise, the several vessels under your command will return to the respective ports as above directed, unless some unforeseen circumstance should prevent.

I am, respectfully,

Your Obd't Serv't,

GIDEON WELLES,

Secretary of the Navy.

Sealed orders were given to Commander Rowan of the Pawnee, Commander Gillis of the Pocahontas, and Captain Tanner of the Harriet Lane, to report to Captain Mercer on the 11th of April, and the entire military and naval expedition was to be under the command of Mr. Fox, who was specially commissioned by the President and received his instructions from the Secretary of War. My instructions to Captain Mercer were read to the President on the 5th of April, who approved them. Although but brief time had been permitted us to fit out the expedition, I congratulated myself, when I went to my room at Willard's on the evening of the 6th of April, that it had been accomplished within the time given us, and that the force had probably sailed.

Between eleven and twelve that night, Mr. Seward and his son Frederick came to my rooms at Willard's with a telegram from Captain Meigs at New York, stating in effect that the movements were retarded and embarrassed by conflicting orders from the Secretary of the Navy. I asked an explanation, for I could not understand the nature

of the telegram or its object. Mr. Seward said he supposed it related to the Powhatan and Porter's command. I assured him he was mistaken, that Porter had no command, and that the Powhatan was the flagship, as he was aware, of the Sumter expedition. He thought there must be some mistake, and after a few moments' conversation, with some excitement on my part, it was suggested that we had better call on the President. Before doing this, I sent for Commodore Stringham, who was boarding at Willard's and had retired for the night. When he came, my statement was confirmed by him, and he went with us, as did Mr. Frederick Seward, to the President. On our way thither Mr. Seward remarked that, old as he was, he had learned a lesson from this affair, and that was, he had better attend to his own business and confine his labors to his own Department. To this I cordially assented.

The President had not retired when we reached the Executive Mansion, although it was nearly midnight. On seeing us he was surprised, and his surprise was not diminished on learning our errand. He looked first at one and then the other, and declared there was some mistake, but after again hearing the facts stated, and again looking at the telegram, he asked if I was not in error in regard to the Powhatan, — if some other vessel was not the flagship of the Sumter expedition. I assured him there was no mistake on my part; reminded him that I had read to him my confidential instructions to Captain Mercer. He said he remembered that fact, and that he approved of them, but he could not remember that the Powhatan was the vessel. Commodore Stringham confirmed my statement, but to make the matter perfectly clear to the President, I went to the Navy Department and brought and read to him the instructions. He then remembered distinctly all the facts, and, turning promptly to Mr. Seward, said the Powhatan must be restored to Mercer, that on no account must the Sumter expedition fail or be interfered with. Mr. Seward hesitated, remonstrated, asked if the other expedi-

tion was not quite as important, and whether that would not be defeated if the Powhatan was detached. The President said the other had time and could wait, but no time was to be lost as regarded Sumter, and he directed Mr. Seward to telegraph and return the Powhatan to Mercer without delay. Mr. Seward suggested the difficulty of getting a dispatch through and to the Navy Yard at so late an hour, but the President was imperative that it should be done.

The President then, and subsequently, informed me that Mr. Seward had his heart set on reinforcing Fort Pickens, and that between them, on Mr. Seward's suggestion, they had arranged for supplies and reinforcements to be sent out at the same time we were fitting out vessels for Sumter, but with no intention whatever of interfering with the latter expedition. He took upon himself the whole blame, said it was carelessness, heedlessness on his part, he ought to have been more careful and attentive. President Lincoln never shunned any responsibility and often declared that he, and not his Cabinet, was in fault for errors imputed to them, when I sometimes thought otherwise.

Mr. Seward never attempted any explanation. He was not communicative on that night, nor afterwards, though there were occasional allusions, by myself, to that singular transaction. Mr. Cameron was greatly incensed; complained that Mr. Seward was trying to run the War Department, had caused Captain Meigs to desert; said he would have Meigs arrested and tried by court martial, that he was absent without leave, was expending the military appropriations without authority from the Secretary of War. My grievance was somewhat similar. Although Lieutenant Porter had gone with the Powhatan to Pensacola, there was no order or record in the Navy Department of the facts. He was absent without leave; the last sailing-orders to the Powhatan were [sent to] Mercer. The whole proceeding was irregular and could admit of no justification without impeaching the integrity or ability of the

Secretaries of War and Navy. No one was more aware of this than the President, and, solicitous that there should be no disagreement or cause for disagreement in his Cabinet, he was not comforted by any reflection or examination of the subject. A large portion of the Home Squadron was off Pensacola, and no additional vessels were required nor could well be spared for that station whilst we were wanting them and many more this side of Key West. I had, moreover, on the earnest application of Lieutenant-General Scott, sent the Crusader and Mohawk already into the Gulf with orders to Captain Adams, the senior officer off Pensacola, to land the troops in order to reinforce Fort Pickens. No additional frigate like the Powhatan was needed there, while she was indispensable here. That vessel gave no greater security to Pickens. The troops, with the naval force already there, were abundantly able to defend it, as results proved. Besides, the defense was military, not naval, and could easily have been reinforced. Hence the reinforcements were stolen away from Sumter and sent to Pickens.

When at a later date I saw the communication of the Rebel commissioners of the 9th of April to Mr. Seward and also Judge Campbell's letter of the 13th of that month, I had one of the keys to the mystery and movements of Mr. Seward. The commissioners state that "on the 15th of March Messrs. Forsyth and Crawford were assured by a person occupying a high official position in the Government, and who, as they believed, was speaking by authority, that Fort Sumter would be evacuated within a very few days, and that no measure changing the existing status prejudicially to the Confederate States as respects Fort Pickens was then contemplated; and these assurances were subsequently repeated, with the addition that any contemplated change as respects Pickens [=Sumter] would be notified to us. On the 1st of April we were again informed that there might be an attempt to supply Fort Sumter with provisions, but that Gov. Pickens should

have previous notice of this attempt. There was no suggestion of any reënforcements."

Judge Campbell and Judge Nelson of the Supreme Court were the high officials alluded to, and the former in his letter of the 13th of April to Mr. Seward says, "On the 1st of April I received from you the statement in writing: I am satisfied the govt. will not undertake to supply Fort Sumter without giving notice to Gov. P." The 1st of April was the day on which Mr. Seward, assisted by Meigs and Porter, prepared the strange series of instructions to me which President Lincoln signed without reading, directing that Captain Barron should be made the confidential detailing officer of the Department with extraordinary powers. It was on the 1st of April that *carte blanche* was given to the two young officers, investing them with full governmental powers and authorizing them to act independently of their superiors and of the heads of their respective departments, by which a military expedition was sent out without the knowledge of the Secretary of War and a naval ship under orders was taken from her destination, her commander displaced, and her cruise broken up without the knowledge of the Secretary of the Navy, whereby the whole plan of sending supplies and reinforcements to Fort Sumter was defeated. The Secretary of State writes the Rebel commission he is satisfied the Government will not undertake to supply Fort Sumter without giving notice to Governor P., when at the very moment he knew the whole energies of the War and Navy Departments were engaged by order of the President in preparations to forward supplies and reinforcements to Sumter. All was rendered abortive, however, by secretly detaching the Powhatan, the flagship to which the squadron was to report and which had the supplies.

On the night of the 6th of April, Secretary Seward was ordered by the President to send a telegram to Porter to restore the Powhatan to Mercer and the expedition to Sumter. But the vessel was not so restored, and on the

following day Mr. Seward writes Judge Campbell, "Faith as to Sumter fully kept; wait and see." I make no comments on these proceedings, by which I, and the President, and others, as well as the Rebel commissioners, were deceived. These letters of Judge Campbell and the commissioners were not disclosed to me by Mr. Seward, nor do I think the President saw them when received.

Porter's instructions, recommended by Seward and signed by Abraham Lincoln, placed that officer in independent command at Pensacola, where his senior, Captain Adams, was in command of the squadron, and the latter was to coöperate with and be subject to the request of his junior in the great object and purpose of the force on that station. The strange and irregular proceeding embarrassed Captain Adams and became uncomfortable to Lieutenant Porter as well as embarrassing to the Secretary of State. Captain Adams could not receive or recognize the Powhatan as a part of his squadron; he had received no orders from the Secretary of the Navy in relation to the vessel or to Lieutenant Porter; and while he could not disregard the strange instructions to which the Secretary of State had persuaded the President to affix his signature, there was nothing requiring his action as commander of the naval forces. Porter could not report or write to the Navy Department, for he was off Pensacola, when by naval record he should have been in the Pacific, and [as he was] in command of the Powhatan by no order from the Secretary of the Navy, — was without orders or instructions from the proper Department, — the officer in command would not receive and forward his letters. Officers are required to send their letters to the Navy Department through their senior officers. The Secretary of State had therefore to correspond with that branch of the Navy, and awkwardly passed over the letters of the officer who was in command of a vessel surreptitiously detached and withdrawn from her legitimate duties.

I may here state that, as early as the 11th of March,

I had, on the application of General Scott, who feared to trust the mails, and was unwilling to send a messenger through the infected region lest he should be arrested, detailed the Crusader to carry an officer with instructions to Captain Vogdes to land his forces and strengthen the garrison at Fort Pickens. When the vessel was ready to sail, General Scott concluded not to send his messenger, but dispatched written orders to Captain Vogdes, which he entrusted to the naval officer to deliver. But Captain Adams, the senior naval officer, would not recognize the orders of General Scott, nor permit Captain Vogdes and his command to land. His justification was an armistice, which had been entered into by Secretaries Holt and Toucey with prominent Rebels, not to reinforce the garrison at Fort Pickens, provided the Rebels would not attack it.

Captain Adams was not entirely satisfied with his own decision. Though technically he might be justified in adhering to the armistice or order of the Secretary of the Navy, rather than obey the order of General Scott, the emergency was one when a faithful and patriotic officer would have been justified in taking a reasonable responsibility. To relieve himself from embarrassment, he immediately dispatched Lieutenant Gwathmey with a secret confidential communication to me, dated the 1st of April, stating the facts and asking instructions. Lieutenant G., although a Secessionist, was faithful to his trust. He travelled night and day, not even stopping in Richmond, where he belonged, and reached Washington on the 6th of April. He came to me on his arrival before he went to his hotel, and took from a belt that was strapped around his body under his shirt, the letter of Captain Adams, which he delivered into my hands. A day or two after this affair, he tendered his resignation, which, however, was not accepted, but he was dismissed from the service.

I went immediately to the President with Captain Adams's communication, and we both deemed it absolutely essential that a special messenger should be forth-

with sent overland with orders to immediately land the troops. Prompt action was all-important, for the Rebellion was rapidly culminating, and the hesitancy of Captain Adams had caused a delay which endangered the possession of Santa Rosa Island and the safety of Fort Pickens. But, in the general demoralization and suspicion which pervaded Washington, who was to be trusted with this important mission? It was then three o'clock in the afternoon, and the messenger must depart by the mail train which left that evening. Paymaster Etting was in Washington, and I sent for him to convey the message. Although not well, he prepared to obey orders, but had my consent to make inquiry for another officer, whose fidelity and energy were unquestioned, to perform the service. About five o'clock he reported to me that Lieut. John Worden had just arrived in Washington, that he would vouch for him as untainted by treason, and as possessed of the necessary qualifications for the mission. I directed that Lieutenant W. should immediately report to me, and in a brief interview I informed him of my purpose to dispatch him on a secret, responsible, and somewhat dangerous duty through the South, and that he must leave in about two hours. He expressed his readiness to obey orders, and, though the time was short and he indifferently prepared, he would be ready at the time designated. I directed him to make no mention of his orders or his journey to any one, not even to his wife, but to call on me as soon as ready and I would in the mean time prepare the document that was to be confided to him. The fact that he was an officer of the Navy passing South to Pensacola, and yet not a Secessionist or in sympathy with them, would be likely to cause him to be challenged and perhaps searched. I therefore wrote a brief dispatch to Captain Adams, which I read to him when he called, and gave it into his hands open, advising that he should commit it to memory, and then, if he thought best, he could destroy the paper. When he saw Captain Adams he could from recollection make

a certified copy to that officer, stating the reasons why he did not produce the original. Everything was successful, for, though he was questioned at one or two points and asked if he was carrying a message, he managed to escape detection, and I believe was not searched.

He reached Pensacola and was put on board the Brooklyn on the 12th of April. That night the troops under command of Captain Vogdes with [a battalion of] marines were landed and Fort Pickens was reinforced. Instead of remaining with the squadron and improving the first opportunity to reach the North by steamer, Lieutenant Worden preferred to land as soon as his message was delivered, and commenced his return, going to Washington by the same route he had taken in going to Pensacola. It was not surprising that the Rebels, when they learned next day that the troops had been landed and were in Fort Pickens, connected the mission of that officer with the movement. Although he had been gone some hours on his homeward journey, the facts were telegraphed to the Rebel leaders at Montgomery, who had him arrested and confined in the prison at that place, where he remained several months until late in the fall, when an exchange was effected, and he reached the North in season to take command of the ironclad and turreted Monitor, the first vessel of that class, and fight the Merrimac in Hampton Roads. He was among the first, if not the very first, prisoners-of-war captured by the Rebels.

The order to Captain Adams to land the troops was received by him, as stated, on the 12th, and the fort was reinforced that night. Lieutenant Porter and the Powhatan did not reach Pensacola until the 17th, five days after Captain Vogdes and his command with the marines were in the fort, — a force sufficient for its defense. In detaching the Powhatan from the Sumter expedition, no important or necessary aid was furnished by her or by Lieutenant Porter to Pickens. Had the frigate remained under Captain Mercer, the attempt to relieve Major Anderson

probably would not have succeeded, for the Rebels of Charleston were strangely prepared and warned of the intended expedition, and there were other movements which precipitated Rebel action.

Soon after President Lincoln had formed the resolution to attempt the relief of Sumter, and whilst it was yet a secret, a young man connected with the telegraph office in Washington, with whom I was acquainted, a native of the same town with myself, brought to me successively two telegrams, conveying to the Rebel authorities information of the purpose and decision of the Administration. One of these telegrams was from Mr. Harvey, a newspaper correspondent, who was soon after, and with a full knowledge of his having communicated to the Rebels the movements of the Government, appointed minister to Lisbon. I had, on receiving these copies, handed them to the President. Mr. Blair, who had also obtained a copy of one, perhaps both, of these telegrams from another source, likewise informed him of the treachery. The subject was once or twice alluded to in Cabinet without eliciting any action, and when the nomination of Mr. Harvey to the Portuguese mission was announced, — a nomination made without the knowledge of any member of the Cabinet but the Secretary of State, and made at his special request, — there was general disapprobation, except by the President (who avoided the expression of any opinion) and by Mr. Seward. The latter defended and justified the selection, which he admitted was recommended by himself, but the President was silent in regard to it.

Two days preceding the attack on Sumter, I met Senator Douglas in front of the Treasury Building. He was in a carriage with Mrs. Douglas, driving rapidly up the street. When he saw me he checked his driver, jumped from the carriage, and came to me on the sidewalk, and in a very earnest and emphatic manner said the Rebels were determined on war and were about to make an assault on Sum-

ter. He thought immediate and decisive measures should be taken; considered it a mistake that there had not already been more energetic action; said the dilatory proceedings of the Government would bring on a terrible civil war, that the whole South was united and in earnest. Although he had differed with the Administration on important questions, and would never be in accord with some of its members on measures and principles that were fundamental, yet he had no fellowship with traitors or disunionists. He was for the Union and would stand by the Administration and all others in its defense, regardless of party.

I proposed that we should step into the State Department, near which we were, and consult with Mr. Seward. The look of mingled astonishment and incredulity which came over him I can never forget. "Then you," said he, "have faith in Seward. Have you made yourself acquainted with what has been going on here all winter? Seward has had an understanding with these men. If he has influence with them, why don't he use it?"

I said Seward was a member of the Administration, and nothing could be done without the knowledge of himself and associates, that to meet him frankly and give him confidence was probably the best course under the circumstances.

He said perhaps it was. He could now see no alternative. "Lincoln is honest and means well. He will do well if counseled right. You and I are old Democrats," he continued, "and I have confidence in you, though we have differed of late. I was glad when I learned you were to be one of the Cabinet, and have told Lincoln he could safely trust you. Seward has too much influence with him."

This is the substance of the conversation, the result of which was that he consented to go with me to the State Department and see Mr. Seward if still there. It was late in the afternoon. He, Douglas, said we must take his word for the information he gave, for he could make no

disclosure of names. He knew what he stated to be true, — that the fire-eaters were going to fire on Sumter.

He requested Mrs. Douglas to remain in the carriage. As we ascended the steps of the old State Department, he said he was going to see Seward because I advised it, and because there was no other course, for he was a part of the Administration, but it was unfortunate for the country that he was so, because Seward did not realize the calamities that were before us, and deceived himself with the belief he had influence at the South when he had none.

Mr. Seward received us cordially, heard the statement of Mr. Douglas calmly, took a pinch of snuff, said he would see the President on the subject. He knew there were wild and reckless men at Charleston and we should have difficulty with them, but he knew of no way to prevent an assault if they were resolved to make one.

Douglas told me subsequently he was not disappointed at the interview. Seward, he said, was not earnest, had no heart in this matter, could not believe the storm was beyond his ability and power to control, but he would soon enough learn that no mere party management or cunning would answer in such an emergency as this. Alluding to his hesitancy in going to Seward, he said he knew it was useless to make any appeal to him. Seward had no idea of the necessities of the case, and was, at that moment, as he, Douglas, knew, carrying on an intrigue with the Rebel leaders, who were deceiving him, whilst he flattered himself that he was using and could control them.

Douglas said he had witnessed what had been going on for months without being able to do anything effectively, for he found himself in the confidence of neither party. He had tried to rally the Democracy, but the party was broken up. Slidell, Cobb, Breckenridge, and others were determined to break up the Union also. He could do nothing with them; others, like myself, had taken the opposite course, and got mixed up with old Whigs, and he had as little influence with us. Buchanan was feeble and

incompetent. The great point with him and his Cabinet since the election had been to drift over the fourth of March. Seward had thought that he could then take the reins and manage things as he pleased, had all along treated this mighty gathering tempest as a mere party contest, which he and Thurlow Weed could dispose of as easily as some of their political strifes in New York.

When he spoke to me it was, he said, with a vague hope or idea that Mr. Lincoln might be induced to act independent of Seward. He had thought of seeing me and having a confidential conversation for some time, and ought to have done so, but it had been postponed till the Sumter news gave him a start, and it was then too late. When I invited him to go to Seward, the man he wished to avoid,— for he considered Seward's mistaken notions, unintentional errors, refined party management, as calamitous as the open treason of Rhett, or Toombs, or Jefferson Davis,— my invitation and remarks awakened him to the actual facts,—that Seward was a part of the Government, and that nothing could be done without him. He had little expectation that anything could be accomplished with him. He had not, Douglas thought, risen to the occasion, nor was he adapted to the times before us.

In detaching the Powhatan from the Sumter expedition and giving the command to Porter, Mr. Seward extricated that officer from Secession influences, and committed him at once, and decisively, to the Union cause. My own impression is that he would have come into that channel as the difficulties progressed, for his energetic, restless, and aspiring nature would not have permitted him to occupy a neutral or passive position, and I never have believed that when the trial test reached him, he would have proved recreant to the flag, whatever were his personal attachments to, and friendships for, the Rebel leaders. As a lieutenant he was entitled to no such command as the Powhatan, a fact of which Mr. Seward, who had little knowledge of

details, was ignorant, but the trust flattered and gratified the ambition of Porter. Finding himself taken into the confidence of the President and Secretary of State, and perceiving that in the matter before them the Secretary giving orders was acting as principal, he presumed to go farther, and was prompted by his audacity to present his friend Barron, between whom and himself there was a common sympathy, for a commanding position in the Navy Department.

Mr. Seward, who, with all his shrewdness and talent, was sometimes the victim of his own vanity and conceit, was flattered by Porter's suggestion that he could give Barron a position; it showed that he was considered by Porter, and he hoped by others, the premier, the controlling mind of the Administration, and it was a wish to confirm this impression, rather than sympathy with any Secession views of Barron, which led him into the otherwise unwarrantable and inexcusable step that was taken.

President Lincoln believed the attempt to thrust Barron on the Navy Department was the fault of Porter rather than Seward, and he never thereafter reposed full confidence in Porter, though not insensible to his professional ability. Often during the four eventful years which followed, when from time to time I availed myself of Porter's qualities and gave him commands and promotion, the President expressed his gratification that I retained no resentment, but sacrificed personal wrongs and injustice for the good of the country.

In about two weeks from the time when I was instructed to take Barron into my confidence, he deserted the Government, went to Richmond, received a commission in the Rebel service, and was taken prisoner in the August following, when Fort Hatteras was captured by Rear-Admiral Stringham, whom he was to have displaced. He was the first of the faithless naval officers who abandoned the Government and took up arms against it that was made prisoner, and, singularly enough, surrendered his sword to

the man whom he was, by Porter's arrangement or Seward's order, to have superseded. Whether Porter was prompted by any of his Rebel associates to intrigue for Barron, or whether they concerted with him to that end, I never ascertained. The facts will probably never be known. There is no doubt that Mr. Seward was in communication with the Rebel leaders, or some of them; not that he was implicated in, or a party to, their rebellious schemes, but he tampered with them, felt confident, as Douglas stated, that when he obtained power he could shape events and control them. He overrated his own powers always, and underestimated others. When he was sworn in to the office of Secretary, he expected and intended to occupy the place of premier, and undoubtedly supposed he could direct the Administration in every Department. Mr. Lincoln had, he knew, little administrative experience. Mr. Seward, therefore, kindly and as a matter of course, assumed that he was to be the master mind of the Government. But whilst he always had the regards and friendly wishes of Mr. Lincoln, to whom he made himself useful, and who was impressed with the belief that his Secretary of State had shrewdness, knowledge, political experience, and capability far greater than he actually possessed, the President in a gentle manner gradually let it be understood that Abraham Lincoln was chief. The incidents which I have detailed — the detachment of the Powhatan, the irregular command given to Porter — were improper proceedings which the President soon comprehended, and the order in relation to Barron convinced him that he must not give implicit trust to any one, but depend on his own judgment in matters of importance.

The supervising control which Mr. Seward at the commencement undertook to assume over all the Departments except that of the Treasury, and the Treasury to an extent, was checked, so far as the Navy Department was concerned; yet, without informing himself of usage, or international, or statute laws, he frequently involved

the Government in difficulty by inconsistently surrendering national rights. Mr. Cameron sometimes complained of interference with the War Department and army matters by the Secretary of State, and on one occasion, when the latter was commending Meigs, as he often did, for great ability, Cameron proposed to transfer that officer to the State Department, where his talents were most used and highest appreciated.

The extraordinary powers and authority with which Captain Meigs and Lieutenant Porter were invested in the spring of 1861 would have alarmed the country and weakened the public confidence in the administrative capacity of the Executive had the facts been known. Mr. Aspinwall and other gentlemen informed me that when Captain Meigs applied to them for assistance and submitted the letters of the President and Secretary of State, clothing him and Porter with unlimited authority over the military and naval service, — confessedly without the knowledge of the Secretary of War or the Secretary of the Navy, — they were alarmed for the safety and welfare of the Government. It betrayed weakness in the executive head. Much had been said and was then uttered by partisans of the incompetency of Mr. Lincoln and his unfitness. He had not been tried, and the period was portentous. But, whatever doubts existed in regard to Mr. Lincoln, they had been in a great measure dispelled when his Cabinet was appointed. Apprehension, however, revived on the arrival of Meigs and Porter in New York, and when their powers were made known. Such as saw those documents — and amongst them was Mr. Aspinwall — were astonished and almost in despair. At the best it was misgovernment and indicated want of confidence, of unity, of energy, and of proper administrative ability at Washington. They were disposed to impute the strange orders and *carte blanche* to the sub-officers as a blunder or mistake of the President, who was taking to himself departmental duties, and issuing direct to officers and subordinates commands and

instructions instead of passing them through the legitimate channels; but the name of Mr. Seward appeared on most of the papers, showing that he was cognizant of and recommended what was doing. One gentleman, more sagacious than the rest, in conversation with me some months later, imputed the whole to a contrivance of Mr. Seward, and the only unaccountable thing to him was the non-appearance of Thurlow Weed in the affair.

There is no doubt that the President was induced to take whatever steps he did, knowingly, in the matters referred to, through the instrumentality and by the advice of Mr. Seward, but he was not knowing to some of the important matters herein stated, and as soon as he was made acquainted with them, he at once disavowed and annulled them. It was a misfortune of Mr. Seward, and one of his characteristics, that he delighted in oblique and indirect movements; he also prided himself in his skill and management, had a craving desire that the world should consider him the great and controlling mind of his party, of the Administration, and of the country. He was intensely anxious to control and direct the War and Navy movements, although he had neither the knowledge nor aptitude that was essential for either.

For more than a month after his inauguration President Lincoln indulged the hope, I may say felt a strong confidence, that Virginia would not, when the decisive stand had finally to be taken, secede, but adhere to the Union. There were among her politicians some able and influential men who favored the Nullification or Secession party, disciples of Calhoun, but it was notorious that a great majority of the people were opposed to all disunion sentiments. These last, though vastly more numerous than the fire-eaters, were passive and calm in their movements, while the Secession element was positive, violent, and active. As is usually the case, the energetic and factious element seized the reins of power, while the more deliberate

were submissive, hesitating and hoping that extreme measures might be avoided.

That there should be no cause of offense, no step that would precipitate or justify secession, the President, almost daily, enjoined forbearance from all unnecessary exercise of political party authority. It was, he believed, important that the Administration should exert its power to conciliate the people and strengthen their attachment to the Government. Whether, in the excited and disturbed condition of the country, when frantic sectional appeals were made in the cause of treason and disunion, the policy pursued was the best, may be a question. Probably a more energetic and decisive course would have been adopted, had events culminated at a later period; but the Administration was just entering upon its duties, and was met at the threshold by an organized and powerful party opposition, at the very time it was encountering and struggling with the Secessionists and before it was possessed of and could fully exercise its rightful authority.

The traffic in slaves was great in Virginia, and embodied more capital than any other product of the State. The traders who were engaged in this nefarious business were reckless and unprincipled men. Nevertheless, wealth even in their hands had its influence, and, coupled with daring and violence, became irresistible. Slaves were the great staple of the State; their sale brought annually a greater return of money to the State than tobacco or any other product, perhaps than all others; their bondsmen found a market in the States of the South, and nowhere else in Christendom. It was natural, and to be expected, that all the ferocious and brutal instincts of the slave-trader should be in opposition to the Administration, and to those States which would not tolerate slavery within their borders. A heavy hand, could it have been placed on these wretches who advocated treason and urged disunion, thronged Richmond, and spent of their ill-gotten wealth profusely to promote secession, would have been better than attempts at

conciliation. The times were revolutionary, and the gentle and persuasive arguments and measures of the Administration were treated as cowardly, while the violent and denunciatory anathemas and avowed hate of the Yankees by the slave-traders, captivated the idle, the vicious, and adventurers, and bore away those with whom they came in contact.

Norfolk was the principal commercial port of the State, and sentiment there gave tone and opinion to lower Virginia. The navy yard at Norfolk afforded employment to many, and the government patronage in party times had been supposed important. Aware of this, the President early made special request that no important or extensive changes should be made in the navy yard at present, or without consulting him. I soon became satisfied that the large amount of public property there was in a precarious condition. As a preventive, or matter of caution, it seemed to me advisable that a military force should be placed there to protect the yard, and to serve as a rallying point for Union men in case of emergency. But General Scott, to whom I applied for troops, said he had none to spare, that he had not sufficient force to guard the Capitol or to garrison Fortress Monroe and Harper's Ferry, which were endangered, and that Norfolk was wholly indefensible. When, after two or three interviews with him, I appealed to the President, he not only concurred with General Scott, but thought it would be inexpedient and would tend to irritate and promote a conflict, were a military force to be sent to Norfolk. Any extraordinary efforts to repair the ships with a view of removing them and the public property would, in his opinion, exhibit a want of confidence and betray apprehensions that should be avoided.

I had as early as the 14th of March ordered the Pocahontas, one of the Home Squadron, which arrived in Hampton Roads, to proceed to Norfolk. This was no unusual order, and could create no apprehension or distrust.

The frigate Cumberland, the flagship of Commodore Pendergrast, commanding the West Indian and Gulf Squadron, arrived in Hampton Roads on the 23d of March, where she was purposely detained, and on the 29th of March I gave orders for her to proceed up Elizabeth River to the navy yard and take the place of the Pocahontas, ordered to join the Sumter expedition.

There were several old-class ships, some of them valuable but dismantled, laid up, which would require a good deal of time and labor to be put in a condition to be removed. The Merrimac, the most valuable vessel at the yard, was wholly dismantled, but the Germantown, the Plymouth, and the Dolphin, all sailing-vessels, could soon and with very little difficulty be got ready for removal or for service. We had, however, few or no seamen to man them, nor could we procure them at Norfolk, but were compelled to enlist and order them from New York or one of the Northern yards. Notwithstanding the sensitive feeling that existed on the part of the people of Virginia, as well as of the Government, I felt that we might with propriety order a sufficient force there to man at least two of the smaller vessels without creating alarm, as it would be legitimate in the ordinary course of things. The Plymouth was designated as the practice ship for the midshipmen, and the Germantown was nearly ready for her armament and crew. No exception could be taken to orders to man them. If the seamen reached Norfolk, and an exigency should arise rendering it expedient to move the Merrimac, they could be made available for that purpose. The Powhatan had just reached New York and was ordered out of commission, but those of her crew whose time had not expired could be made available for valuable service at Norfolk, and such was the first intention of the Department, but important events for the relief of Fort Sumter rendered it necessary to detain the seamen on the Powhatan for the Sumter expedition, and to add to them the recruits from the receiving-ship. These orders took almost all the re-

cruits who were intended for Norfolk, as soon as two hundred and fifty were enlisted. Orders were given to Paymaster Etting to proceed to New York and charter a vessel to take the men to Norfolk, and also to Commander Rowan, but the orders could not be fulfilled. The order for two hundred men was sent to Brooklyn on the 11th of April.

The fidelity and patriotism of Commodore McCauley, who was in command of the yard, were questioned by no one, and his reputation as a good and faithful officer all admitted (though not particularly efficient). I had not seen him for several years, but the inquiries which I made in regard to him were satisfactorily answered. Subsequent events proved him faithful but feeble and incompetent for the crisis. His energy and decision had left him, and, whatever skill or ability he may have had in earlier years in regular routine duty, he proved unequal in almost every respect to the present occasion. He made no report or suggestion to me of disaffection or doubt on the part of any officer, and in answer to inquiries which I made of him as to the time which would be necessary to put the engines or machinery of the Merrimac in order, so that she could be moved, he sent me word that it would require at least a month. On receiving this answer, I became apprehensive that I could not depend upon him if the emergency should demand prompt action, and I at once directed the engineer-in-chief, Mr. Isherwood, to proceed, with whatever assistance he needed, to Norfolk, and, without creating a sensation, but in a quiet manner, to put the machinery in working condition with the least possible delay. To do this, he was directed to call to his assistance whatever force was necessary, and to work without cessation day and night until it was accomplished. Instead of a month, the work was completed within less than four days.

On the 11th of April, I issued orders to Commander Alden, then in Washington, to proceed to Norfolk and report to Commodore McCauley to take charge of the Merrimac and deliver her over to the commanding officer of the

Philadelphia station. Many of the instructions in those days were given orally, for what became a matter of record was too often, in some mysterious way, made known to the insurgents. No more than was absolutely necessary was put upon paper for any of the officers who were sent to Norfolk.

Engineer Isherwood had the machinery in working order by the 16th, and Commodore McCauley wrote me on that day that the Merrimac would be ready for service by the following evening, the 17th. Chief Engineer Isherwood returned and reported to me on the 18th that Commodore McCauley had defeated the plans and purposes of the Department; that he would not permit the Merrimac to leave; was, he thought, under the influence of liquor and bad men. In company with the President, I saw General Scott again the following day, when he repeated the same opinions, but on the 19th [*sic*] he promised that General Delafield or a good engineer should be detailed who would cause some defenses to be thrown up.

My impressions are that Commander Alden called and made report on the same day with Mr. Isherwood, but he states it was on the 19th and that he returned to Norfolk on the same evening on the Pawnee under Commodore Paulding. Alden was timid, but patriotic when there was no danger, for he was not endowed with great moral or physical courage, yet believed himself possessed of both, and was no doubt really anxious to do something without encountering enemies or taking upon himself much responsibility. At Norfolk all his heroic drawing-room resolution and good intentions failed him. He had not the audacity nor the moral courage to meet his professional brethren who had those qualities and were determined to sustain the Secession cause. A man of energy and greater will and force, with the orders of the Secretary, would have inspired and influenced McCauley, whose heart was right, and carried out these orders.

While in Cabinet-meeting, I was called out by Com-

mander Alden, who informed me, with emotion which he could not entirely suppress, that Commodore McCauley had refused to let him have the Merrimac, that after the fires had been kindled they had been drawn by the Commodore's command, that the vessel was at the wharf, and that the deportment and remarks of some of the younger officers left no doubt in his mind that they had control of the Commodore and of the yard. The old man, he said, seemed stupefied, bewildered, and wholly unable to act. Instead of inspiring the well-intentioned but infirm old man, Alden had struck away from the yard and had immediately returned to report to the Department. I took him forthwith to the President, and the Cabinet, which was then in session, when he related what had occurred.

At the consultation which took place as soon as he withdrew, I advised that immediate steps should be taken for the defense of the navy yard, stated the large amount of public property there, in ships, material, ordnance, machinery, tools, and stores of every description, the necessity, in a naval and military point of view, of retaining possession of the yard, and the disastrous consequences to the Government of permitting such a station to be wrested from its possession, or of abandoning it to the insurgents. The President and Cabinet concurred in these views, and when I informed them of the opposition of General Scott to sending a military force to protect the yard, it was thought advisable that the President and myself should see him on the subject.

I went from the Executive Mansion to military headquarters and saw General Scott, to whom I communicated the condition of affairs and the necessity of a military force without delay at Norfolk. But the General was still decisive and emphatic against sending troops to defend the place, said it was an impossibility to furnish the troops, or to defend the navy yard if we had them; that any force he could send there would certainly be captured; the Navy and marines might, if on shipboard, escape, but

the troops could not; repeating continually it was enemy's country. All this and more he repeated to the President and myself at the interview, but he finally consented that a battalion of Massachusetts volunteers, which he supposed might be at Fortress Monroe, from information just received, should accompany an expedition under Commodore Paulding, to withdraw the vessels and as much of the public property as could be secured, and that he would send Colonel Delafield — subsequently Captain Wright, an intelligent officer, instead of Delafield — with them.

I had previously, on the 16th, after hearing from Commodore McCauley that a month was required to put the Merrimac in condition to be removed, dispatched Commodore Paulding, who was then attached to the Department as detailing officer, to Norfolk, to inquire into and inform himself of the actual state of things at the yard, the reliability of officers and men, and to satisfy himself fully in regard to Commodore McCauley. If he had any doubts of the safety of the yard after examination, he was to advise me, and was to act for me in all particulars, provided danger was imminent, having plenary powers for the purpose. On the morning of the 18th, Commodore Paulding unexpectedly returned and made a satisfactory verbal report or statement concerning Commodores McCauley and Pendergrast and the condition of the yard. Some of the younger officers, who belonged in Virginia or the South, had expressed a wish to be relieved from duty at the yard in anticipation of difficulty with the insurgents, among whom were their kinsmen and neighbors, with whom they preferred not to come in collision; but all were, he said, patriotic, deprecated hostility, and were governed by honorable motives. Commodore McCauley he indorsed as faithful, competent, and to be trusted. He was seconded by Commodore Pendergrast, commanding the Home Squadron, who had arrived in Hampton Roads a few days previous with his flagship, the Cumberland, and had orders to proceed with the frigate up the Elizabeth River

to the vicinity of the navy yard. Commodore Pendergrast said he had consulted freely and fully with both those officers, had made some suggestions and assented to others made by them, and was so well satisfied that the workmen were reliable and that the public property was in good and trustworthy hands, that he thought it unnecessary he should remain, but that it was best he should return to Washington and make report in person. Although this report was more favorable than I had expected, I greatly regretted he did not remain and act for the Department, and so informed him. I also blamed myself for not having given him explicit written orders to that effect.[1]

My preliminary orders and inquiries were oral and not matters of record; my first written orders were on the 29th of March; Virginia did not pass the ordinance of secession until the 17th April. Until then it was hoped and believed by many, including the President and Secretary of State, that Virginia would not secede.

It will be borne in mind that Congress, which had just adjourned, put forth no preparation for the coming crisis, had made no extra appropriations, had not authorized the enlistment of any additional seamen; almost all our naval force was abroad; most of the small Home Squadron was in the Gulf or West Indies, nearly as remote and inaccessible as the European Squadron; and the whole available force north of the Chesapeake had been dispatched to the

[1] [Mr. Welles in his manuscript here cited such orders and portions of the correspondence as became a matter of record: —

"See Order of March 29th to Pendergrast to proceed with Cumberland to Norfolk.

"Order to Breese 31st of March for seamen — also order of 11th April for seamen.

"Order of 11th April to Alden.

"Orders of 11th April to McCauley to prepare the Merrimac and Plymouth.

"Orders of 11th April to Isherwood to proceed to Norfolk.

"Letter 16th April to McCauley.

"McCauley's letter of 16th April to me.

"Order to Paulding of 18th April.

"Isherwood's report 18th April."]

relief of Fort Sumter and secretly and surreptitiously, without the knowledge of the Navy Department, sent to Fort Pickens. Without men, without funds, without legislative authority, without advice, suggestion, or intimation of any kind from Congress, from the Senators on the Naval Committee, who remained in Washington through the month of March, while rebellion was gathering strength, the Secretary was compelled to take the whole responsibility and to act in that great emergency. Foremost among the men who had defied the South and treated with scorn and derision the secession theory and movement, was Senator John P. Hale, Chairman of the Naval Committee of the Senate: one of the first to flee from Washington, when the storm which had gathered was about to burst, was the same distinguished Senator. When, however, Congress convened in special session in July, and Washington was garrisoned and shielded by a large army, this burning and eloquent patriot returned, and, overflowing with courage, was moved in the exuberance of his zeal to introduce a resolution to inquire into the circumstances attending the destruction of the property of the United States at the navy yard at Norfolk, and especially if there was any default on the part of any officer. Pensacola and Harper's Ferry were included in the inquiry, but the virtuous indignation of the Chairman of the Naval Committee was chiefly exercised and wholly exhausted in regard to Norfolk. His wrath was less against the Rebels than somebody else, he did not care to mention whom. When notified by Mr. Hale that his committee was in session, that certain information was wanted by them, and I was told in a patronizing way that any explanation by way of justification of the Department would be received, I directed that the whole transactions in relation to Norfolk should be thrown open for his examination, that, so far as the Department could furnish them, answers should be given to all specific inquiries, and that every facility should be extended to the Committee; but for myself I declined

any appearance or explanation. My time, I assured the honorable chairman, was too much occupied in attending to necessary public duties to detail narratives or enter into explanations that were personal. It was my intention they should have all the facts, and I wished them fully and fairly reported, but I certainly should volunteer no attendance.

In his report as Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Hale manifests his patriotic fervor, military skill, and intelligence, and all the candor and fairness within him. There was a wide difference between him and General Scott in regard to the defense of Norfolk, for while the old hero said no troops could be had, and insisted that the yard could not be defended, that the place was without fortifications or defenses of any kind, that troops placed there would inevitably be captured, the chairman of the committee of investigation, Mr. John P. Hale, represented otherwise, and asserted in his report that "Captain McCauley was abundantly able to defend the yard," which was "encompassed on two sides by a wall ten or twelve feet high, and eighteen inches thick," that there was an available force of at least one hundred and fifty marines and sailors with two howitzers "and the crew of the Cumberland of three hundred and fifty men."

The report enumerates other means also, none of which appear to have convinced General Scott, or either of the three commodores who were there with full powers, and who commanded the forces and were entrusted with the defense. There is this difference between the military and naval officers on one side, and the Senatorial Committee on the other: the naval and military gentlemen were compelled to take the responsibility and act promptly according to their best judgment in the line of their profession, and the performance of duty to which they had been trained. They may have erred in some respects; it would be strange if they did not under the extraordinary circumstances of the case. Mr. Hale had no responsibility, was

embarrassed by no military or naval teaching, was beyond danger, and made his report, criticizing and condemning their conduct, twelve months after the event took place.

Mr. Horace Greeley, in his "American Conflict," elucidates and illuminates the report of Mr. Hale, which he assumes to be non-partisan and correct, by saying "Capt. Paulding might have held his position a week, and that week would have brought at least 30,000 men to his aid." Not thirty thousand men reached imperiled Washington in one week, in response to the call of the President by proclamation, aided by all the State authorities, and official and individual effort, zeal, and influence; and such as came in obedience to that national call were indifferently provided with arms, munitions, and supplies, backed though they were by the Federal and State governments. If the historian is to be believed, a larger army would have gathered on an appeal from the Commodore to save the navy yard, than came to defend the National Capital on the official call of the President. What thirty thousand men could have done, had they gathered at Norfolk in a week, towards defending a place in the enemy's country, without batteries or shore defenses of any kind, without engineers to construct them, without resources, with no commissariat or quartermaster's supplies, are matters not clearly explained in the "American Conflict." It is doubted if Mr. Greeley could have got that number of men at Norfolk, to say nothing of their equipment and supplies, when the President, with all the power and energies of the country, gathered no such number in that brief time at Washington to defend the capital of the nation.

In closing his chapter on "the national disgrace at Norfolk," in his "American Conflict," Mr. Greeley, who readily, oracularly, and dogmatically, without investigation, adopted the statements of the factious, partisan, untruthful, unjust, and iniquitous report of Mr. Hale, says: "Thus ended the most shameful, cowardly, disastrous

performance that stains the annals of the American Navy." Such is contemporary history.

In the light of subsequent events the performance may be condemned. It was certainly unfortunate and disastrous. There were feebleness and incapacity in McCauley, and treachery and infidelity on the part of some, in fact most, of his subordinates, — matters shameful indeed, but I am aware of no evidence of cowardice, even in the pusillanimous commander. He and his associates were astounded by the defection of Virginia, and overwhelmed with the magnitude of the rebellion, for which Mr. Senator Hale had, neither in Congress nor out of it, suggested preparations, and Congress had made but feeble or no provision. Mr. Greeley had in his organ, the *Tribune*, said if the States wished to secede, let them go. Until the storm burst, Congress had not believed that the overthrow of the government or a division of the Union was intended, nor could the members realize that such a tornado was then upon them. At the commencement they would not be aggressive; they hesitated to be the first to imbrue their hands in the blood of their countrymen. Mr. John P. Hale and Mr. Horace Greeley might have done differently from those officers and saved the navy yard and public property at Norfolk by tactics of their own, when military and naval men could not.

The misfortune was bad enough when truly and fairly stated, but aggravated by the misrepresentations and exaggerations of reckless and unscrupulous men in Congress, like Hale, and by the partisan fictions and imaginary delusions of journalists such as Greeley, great injustice was done to officers of courage and undoubted patriotism, as well as to the Department and Administration. It is easy to be seen that had a younger and more vigorous officer than McCauley been in command of the yard, or a more daring and energetic officer than Alden sent there, a different course might and probably would have been adopted, and some of the vessels and public property been saved. But

at the time no officer in the service had a more unexceptionable record than McCauley. Not a word, not a suspicion, was breathed of any want of ability, courage, or fidelity in that officer. Nor was there any want of confidence in Paulding, or Pendergrast, who were younger and more vigorous men, nor were the heroic and gallant juniors who participated with them in that disastrous performance destitute of true heroism or devoted patriotism. In scuttling the ships, McCauley and Pendergrast committed a lamentable mistake. They were deceived without doubt, and in that terrible crisis were not equal to the emergency. They were not partisan politicians, and could not believe that so wanton, causeless, and extensive a conspiracy existed; and when the crisis came, they were confounded and not prepared to act. When they did act, it was in bewilderment and error. Whether different officers would have had better success cannot be known. They might have rescued the Merrimac and some other vessels, though that is uncertain, for the Rebels had been long preparing for the event, and were the positive element; the Union men were passive. The Rebels were resolute and acted on the offensive; our officers were incredulous and on the defensive. They were anxious to strike and fight, while the others merely deprecated and repelled.

When Greeley says that one week would have brought thirty thousand men to Norfolk to aid Commodore Paulding, he betrays weakness and his unfitness as a historian. General Scott knew better. He would have sent no thirty thousand troops there, had the men been in Washington. What could thirty thousand undisciplined, unofficered men have accomplished, but their own destruction? Like the heedless and senseless cry from the same vicious source, "On to Richmond," the assertion that Norfolk could have rallied to its defense thirty thousand men is the essence of partisan folly.

Senator Hale, who hurried to introduce a resolution to investigate and report in July, 1861, but delayed and lin-

gered in communicating his invidious and unjust document until April, 1862, had an object in his movement. He desired to embarrass and assail the Navy Department, of which he was the Senatorial organ, and to which he should have given his earnest, honest, and zealous support. Nothing would have afforded him higher gratification than to have found the Secretary, who had mildly dispensed with his proffered agency, remiss and delinquent, and it would have delighted him had I subjected myself to his criticism and rebuke, or attempted to defend or explain to him and his committee the proceedings and errors of naval officers. I neither sought nor shunned him. The records of the Department were thrown open to him, and they were a defense and justification. He slurs over the orders, oral and written, in March and early April, preceding the occurrence, and says the first steps taken for the defense of Norfolk were on the 10th of April, thirty-seven days after the inauguration. Were that the fact, it would not have been, under the circumstances, when Congress had been delinquent, tardy action. But I had on the 29th of March changed the destination of the frigate Cumberland, which, by special direction of the President, on request of the Secretary of State, was about proceeding to the Gulf, and ordered her from Hampton Roads to Norfolk to check disorderly proceedings, should any appear. In repeated verbal applications to General Scott for a military force in the months of March and April, as a precautionary measure, I met a refusal, on the ground of military necessity and inability to comply. He had not, he said, troops to defend Harper's Ferry, a military station, which was actually captured by the Rebels simultaneously with the destruction of Norfolk. As there was not a soldier to defend the place and we had no sailors to man the vessels, I sent, on the 31st of March, to New York, general and special orders for two hundred and fifty men to be dispatched to Norfolk, and, if there were not that number on hand, to enlist and forward them as soon as possible. All

the steamers, and almost the whole limited naval force in all the Atlantic ports, had been sent to the relief of Forts Sumter and Pickens.

These facts were well known to Senator Hale, Chairman of the Naval Committee of the Senate and of the special committee to investigate the destruction of property at Norfolk, — many of them, and others, were not matters of record, — but he was careful to suppress and make no allusion to them; some that were mentioned were greatly perverted and distorted. The report was his own. Senator Grimes, who was associated with him on the committee, took especial pains on more than one occasion to assure me that he had no hand in drawing it up, that he never gave it his approval, and I think he said he never read it until after it was presented to the Senate and published. I should have been better pleased had he made this statement and disclaimer publicly and in open Senate. But I would not ask it.

I knew I had done my duty faithfully, honestly, and as well as I knew how. I knew that the President, to whom I was immediately accountable, approved of my course, and was fully satisfied with it. Congress, under all the misrepresentations and intrigues of the malcontents, while regretting in common with the Administration and the whole country the loss of the navy yard and property, were convinced that the Department acquitted itself faithfully and well.

I was introduced to Mr. Stanton by President Lincoln at the Executive Mansion in January, 1862. It was at the first Cabinet-meeting which he attended after receiving the appointment of Secretary of War. I had not previously met him, although I had then been ten months in Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet. The period was trying; true and patriotic friends had come forward to encourage us, but Mr. Stanton, who was a resident of Washington, avoided the President and most of his Cabinet. The times were such as to

interrupt social intercourse in the District between Unionists and Secessionists, and the lines between them were marked. Old associations were broken up, and it was difficult to form new ones, even when persons had leisure, which members of the Administration had not. A majority of the resident population, and particularly of those who formed the resident élite of society, were Secessionists, or in sympathy with Secessionists. A feeling of bitterness pervaded the whole community, and the members of the Court Circle, which had been in the fashionable ascendant during the administrations of Pierce and Buchanan, did not conceal their dislike, detestation, and hate of the Black Republicans, intensified among the masses in the District. Mr. Stanton had not been counted as a Republican, although there was an impression he had, as a member of Mr. Buchanan's Cabinet, approved the policy of that administration in the winter of 1861, and acted with Dix and Holt. This impression did not obtain with Mr. Black[1] and the intimate friends and supporters of Buchanan.

Although not fond of the gayeties and parties of Washington, he could at times make himself companionable and entertaining; but from the day he left Mr. Buchanan's Cabinet until he entered that of Mr. Lincoln, he mingled little in society, and none with the men in authority. It was represented that he eschewed the new administration, ridiculed the President, and freely expressed his opposition to the measures adopted and course pursued by the Government. The Secessionists distrusted him, and neither of the parties confided in him in the early days of the War. The Administration did not consider him one of its supporters, though he was on friendly terms with Seward. He had the reputation of being an Anti-Secession Democrat, who nevertheless wished to preserve his relationship with the Democratic Party, and as having no fellowship with Republicans.

[1] Jeremiah S. Black, first Attorney-General, then Secretary of State, in Buchanan's Cabinet.

When the appointment of District Attorney for Washington was under consideration in the spring of 1861, Mr. Stanton and Mr. Carrington were the rival candidates. Some diversity of opinion was entertained by the members of the Cabinet in regard to them. Mr. Seward earnestly pressed Mr. Stanton, vouched for his loyal sentiments, and claimed that he had in a confidential way rendered great service to the Union cause while in Mr. Buchanan's Cabinet. Mr. Bates, the Attorney-General, desired the appointment of Mr. Carrington, who was, I believe, not only an intimate friend, but kinsman. Himself a man of courteous manners, Mr. Bates could not, he thought, have the unreserved freedom with or repose the same confidence in Mr. Stanton that he could in Mr. Carrington, and the times were such that there should be implicit confidence between the Attorney-General and the District Attorney in the discharge of their frequently delicate and always highly responsible duties.

The subject was several times before the Cabinet, but as I knew neither of the gentlemen personally, I expressed no opinion, for I had none in regard to either. Mr. Chase seconded the views of Mr. Seward for Stanton, but no other one interested himself in the case, or seemed disposed to interfere in the question. At length the President declared the subject must be disposed of, and wished each one present to communicate whatever knowledge he possessed of either. He appealed particularly to Mr. Blair, who resided in Washington, was a member of the bar, and knew both the gentlemen well.

Mr. Blair said that he had not for that reason wished to say much, but thus called upon he should speak the truth. In point of ability, he said, Mr. Stanton was undoubtedly the superior of Mr. Carrington. He doubted, however, Stanton's integrity, and stated a damaging fact which was within his own personal knowledge, but which it is not necessary here to repeat. The statement astonished the President and disconcerted both Seward and Chase, each

of whom questioned whether there might not be some mistake in this matter, but Blair said there could be none, and farther that he (Stanton) was a protégé of Black, Buchanan's Secretary of State, and in feeling with him. The President remarked he thought it judicious to conciliate and draw in as much of the Democratic element as possible, and he was willing to try Stanton, though personally he had no special reason to regard him favorably; but the office came within the province of the Attorney-General, and he would turn the question over to him. The Attorney-General thanked the President, and said he would on returning to his office send over the appointment of Mr. Carrington.

From current rumors I was not very favorably impressed in regard to Mr. Stanton. His remarks on the personal appearance of the President were coarse, and his freely expressed judgment on public measures unjust. He may have felt chagrined at the preference of Carrington.

In the fall and winter of 1861, when murmurs began to be heard against General McClellan, it was said, and I suppose correctly, that Stanton was his friend and adviser. Until appointed Secretary of War, there was no intimacy between him and the members of the Administration, with the exception of Mr. Seward. I have reason to know that he was engaged with discontented and mischievous persons in petty intrigues to impair confidence in the Administration.

When it was determined that Mr. Cameron should retire from the office of Secretary of War, — not wholly for the reason that was given out, but for certain loose matters of contracts, and because he had not the grasp, power, energy, comprehension, and important qualities essential to the administration of the War Department of that period, to say nothing of his affiliation with Chase, — it was a surprise, not only to the country but to every member of the Administration but the Secretary of State, that Stanton was selected. He was doubtless the choice of

Mr. Seward, who influenced the President and secured the appointment.

Seward and Stanton had been brought into fellowship in the winter of 1861, when the latter was a member of Buchanan's Cabinet, and confided to the former the operations and purposes of the Administration. It was this communion between the two, who had been of opposing politics and parties, — one at the time a member of the outgoing, the other of the incoming Executive Council, — which led to that political and personal intimacy which eventuated in the induction of Stanton to the War Department. Mr. Seward always looked upon Stanton as his protégé, and Stanton, who, with all his frankness, real and assumed, had, towards his superiors in position or intellect, some of the weaker qualities of a courtier, was studious to continue the inpression that he was dependent upon and a follower of the Secretary of State. It gratified Mr. Seward, who felt his own consequence when a member of Buchanan's Cabinet sought the opportunity and gave him his confidence, and gave Stanton an influence and hold upon his acknowledged leader that remained during the whole of the latter's official career. . . .

Others claimed and have been given some portion of the credit of Stanton's appointment, but it belonged exclusively to Mr. Seward, and this Mr. Stanton well knew. It has been stated that Mr. Cameron selected his successor, and, to soften his exit from a position that he was reluctant to leave, the change was permitted to assume that shape; but Mr. Seward was the engineer and manager, and he it was who selected Edwin M. Stanton to be Secretary of War. There was reluctance on the part of the President to remove Mr. Cameron, and only a conviction of its absolute necessity and the unauthorized assumption of executive power in his Annual Report would have led the President to take the step.

From the 4th of March, 1861, to the day he was selected, a period of darkness and struggle for national existence,

when the Rebels had the Government by the throat, and true friends were wanted, no word of encouragement, no outspoken support of the Administration, was heard from Mr. Stanton. He may in private interviews with Mr. Seward, or in incidental conversations with Mr. Chase, have modified his expressions, but the Administration did not know him as an open, fearless, outspoken friend. It has been said that all the members of the Cabinet but Mr. Blair heartily concurred in the appointment. No member of the Cabinet was aware of his selection until after it was determined upon, except Mr. Seward, and the machinery of having Mr. Cameron name his successor was an after arrangement. Then Mr. Chase was called in and consulted on a predetermined question, but without a full knowledge of all the facts, and no other member was advised in regard to it.

Mr. Chase was peculiarly sensitive in matters where Mr. Seward was operating, and, to preserve harmony, he was led to believe that he was early consulted and one of the original prime movers in effecting the change. He had, however, known little of the retirement of Cameron, who had at the beginning been attached to the State rather than the Treasury Department, but latterly Cameron leaned to Chase, who sought the association. Mr. Blair's opinion of Stanton was well understood, and to have consulted him when it was known he could not, with the facts in his possession, give the selection his approval, would have been trifling; and the other members of the Cabinet, having little knowledge of and no intimacy with Stanton, could furnish nothing to influence or guide the President. He, therefore, deemed it best, after yielding to Seward's urgent representations, to act without consulting a majority of the Cabinet, who, he knew, could give him no light on the subject. The course adopted soothed Mr. Blair, gratified Mr. Chase, and, the scheme being one of Mr. Seward's contrivance, he could not be otherwise than satisfied.

Mr. Black says that Stanton went into Buchanan's Cabinet under his auspices, and no one has ever questioned it. He further asserts that Mr. Stanton "said, many times, that he was there only that I [Black] might have two voices instead of one," that "he would resign if I did." The same professions and the same expressions were made by the same individual to Mr. Seward when he entered the Lincoln Cabinet, and subsequently, as I heard Mr. Seward say; and I doubt not with equal sincerity to each, though Black and Seward were entirely antagonistic in their political views and principles.

When introduced to Mr. Stanton, I met him frankly, friendly, and sincerely, as an associate and colleague with whom I was to hold intimate personal and official relations in a responsible position and in a trying period. There was, however, no immediate cordiality between us, but there was formal courtesy. I was at that time furiously attacked by many newspapers and active partisans, as well as by disappointed speculators and contractors, and Mr. Stanton may have received unfavorable impressions from them. I knew that he had been in consultation with, and given improper and hostile advice to, some of the disaffected. He was not, however, aware that I was possessed of that information, and I am certain it did not influence my action or deportment towards him.

The New Orleans expedition, which was far under way when Stanton was appointed, but all knowledge of which had been studiously withheld from the War Department and all others, first brought us together. A force had been gathered in the Gulf, ostensibly to attack Mobile or Galveston, but really destined for the Mississippi. The latter fact had not been communicated to the War Department, because secrets could not then be kept but inevitably leaked out, contractors became importunate, and the Rebels often were forewarned. Shortly after Mr. Stanton's appointment, Mr. Fox, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, inadvertently and incautiously made known to General

Butler and to Mr. Stanton the great object which had occupied the attention of the Navy Department for several months. Mr. Stanton seized hold of the information with avidity, and gave a hearty support to the movement—the more acceptable because General McClellan, who had known our object and was by express direction of President Lincoln to coöperate with the Navy, appeared indifferent and had little confidence in our success. Mr. Stanton also united with us in the necessity of driving the Rebels from the right banks of the Potomac, taking possession of their batteries, and opening the river to uninterrupted navigation, a work in which General McClellan had frequently disappointed us. The expectations and hopes that something effective might be done in opening the navigation of that important avenue to Washington had been so delusive that we united in requesting President Lincoln to issue his celebrated order of the 27th of January for a forward movement, which was ordered to take place on the 22d of February. Such an order had been suggested, before Mr. Stanton's appointment, by the Navy Department, which had become wearied with the delays and tardy action of the General-in-Chief.

These and other matters had brought the War and Navy Departments into harmonious action, but with no cordial intimacy between the Secretaries. Indeed, no member of the Cabinet but Mr. Seward enjoyed intimate relations with the new Secretary of War, although Mr. Chase paid him assiduous attention, and was in return treated with due respect and courtesy. To Mr. Chase he may have been more communicative than to others, because the former was almost daily at the War Department, while the rest of us seldom went there save on business, and were less attentive.

When intelligence reached Washington on Sunday morning, the 9th of March, that the Merrimac had come down from Norfolk and attacked and destroyed the Cumberland and Congress, I called at once on the President, who had sent

for me. Several members of the Cabinet soon gathered. Stanton was already there, and there was general excitement and alarm. Although my Department and the branch of the Government entrusted to me were most interested and most responsible, the President ever after gave me the credit of being, on that occasion, the most calm and self-possessed of any member of the Government. The President himself was so excited that he could not deliberate or be satisfied with the opinions of non-professional men, but ordered his carriage and drove to the navy yard to see and consult with Admiral Dahlgren and other naval officers, who might be there. Dahlgren, always attentive and much of a courtier, had, to a great extent, the President's regard and confidence; but in this instance Dahlgren, who knew not of the preparation or what had been the purposes of the Department, could give the President no advice or opinion, but referred him to me. The inability of Dahlgren to advise seemed to increase the panic. General Meigs, who was of much the same temperament with Dahlgren, was also sent for by the President, Stanton, or Seward. The latter had great confidence in Meigs on all occasions, and deferred to him more than to his superior, in all matters of a military character.

Dahlgren and Meigs were both intelligent officers and in their specialties among the first of their respective professions, but neither of them was endowed with the fighting qualities of Farragut or Sheridan, and in that time of general alarm, without information or facts, they were not the men to allay panic or tranquillize the government officials. They were prudent, cautious men, careful to avoid danger, and provide the means to escape from it.

But the most frightened man on that gloomy day, the most so I think of any during the Rebellion, was the Secretary of War. He was at times almost frantic, and as he walked the room with his eyes fixed on me, I saw well the estimation in which he held me with my unmoved and unexcited manner and conversation.

The Merrimac, he said, would destroy every vessel in the service, could lay every city on the coast under contribution, could take Fortress Monroe; McClellan's mistaken purpose to advance by the Peninsula must be abandoned, and Burnside would inevitably be captured. Likely the first movement of the Merrimac would be to come up the Potomac and disperse Congress, destroy the Capitol and public buildings; or she might go to New York and Boston and destroy those cities, or levy from them contributions sufficient to carry on the War. He asked what vessel or means we had to resist or prevent her from doing whatever she pleased.

I stated our vessels were not as powerful or in numbers as extensive as I wished. It was certain, however, the Merrimac could not come to Washington and go to New York at the same time. I had no apprehension of her visiting either, and wished she were then in the Potomac, for if so we could take efficient measures to dispose of her. That Burnside and the force in the Sounds were safe from her, because her draft of water was such she could not approach them. That the Monitor was in Hampton Roads, and I had confidence in her power to resist, and, I hoped, to overcome, the Merrimac. She should have been there sooner to have destroyed the Merrimac, but the contractors had disappointed us.

Mr. Seward, who had been desponding, contrary to his usual temperament and custom, rendered more timid by the opinion and alarm of Stanton, said my remark in relation to the draft of water of the Merrimac gave him the first moment's relief he had experienced.

Stanton made some sneering inquiry about this new vessel the Monitor, of which he admitted he knew little or nothing. I described her, and [said] that it had been our intention, had she been completed within contract time, to have sent her up to Norfolk to destroy the Merrimac before she came out of the dry dock. Stanton asked about her armament, and when I mentioned she had two guns,

his mingled look of incredulity and contempt cannot be described; and the tone of his voice, as he asked if my reliance was on that craft with her two guns, is equally indescribable. Others mingled in the conversation with anxiety and concern, but on the part of Stanton there was censure, bitterness, and a breaking-out of pent-up malevolence that I could not misunderstand. Others, alarmed by the destruction which had taken place and dreading further disaster, had their fears increased by his harsh manner; but, though unsupported and unassisted, I was not appalled or affected by his terror and bluster. I more correctly read and understood his character in that crisis than he mine. It was the first, and, save a repetition on the following day, the only, occasion when he attempted to exercise towards me that rude and offensive insolence for which he became notorious in the discharge of his official duties.

That day and its incidents were among the most unpleasant and uncomfortable of my life. The events were momentous and portentous to the nation, the responsibility and the consequence of the disaster were heavier on me than on any other individual; there was no one to encourage and sustain me. Admiral Smith, always self-possessed and intelligent, who would have stood by me, was overwhelmed with the tidings, for his son was on the Congress, and, as his father predicted when tidings reached him of the fate of that vessel, had fallen a victim. My Assistant, Fox, was absent at Hampton Roads in anticipation of the arrival of the Monitor, whither he had gone before these occurrences to meet her. Dahlgren and Meigs, by nature and training cautious, not to say timid, who had been called in, were powerless, and in full sympathy with Stanton in all his fears and predictions.

In all that painful time my composure was not disturbed, so that I did not perhaps as fully realize and comprehend the whole impending calamity as others, and yet to me there was throughout the whole day something inexpress-

ibly ludicrous in the wild, frantic talk, action, and rage of Stanton as he ran from room to room, sat down and jumped up after writing a few words, swung his arms, scolded, and raved. He could not fail to see and feel my opinion of him and his bluster, — that I was calm and unmoved by his rant, spoke deliberately, and was not excited by his violence.

The President, though as uncomfortable as any of us, and having his alarm increased by the fears and scary apprehensions of Stanton, manifested much sympathy and consideration for me. My composure and the suggestions and views I presented were evidently a relief to him, but Stanton's wailings and woeful predictions disturbed him. Both he and Stanton went repeatedly to the window and looked down the Potomac — the view being uninterrupted for miles — to see if the Merrimac was not coming to Washington. It was asked what we could do if she were now in sight. I told the President she could not, if in the river, with her heavy armor, cross the Kettle Bottom Shoals. This was a relief. Dahlgren was consulted. He thought it doubtful if she could reach Washington, if she entered the river.

Stanton asked what we could do for the defense and protection of New York and other cities. I knew of nothing. Our information of the Merrimac — for we had had every few days report of her condition — was that she could not, with her heavy and ill-adjusted armor, penetrate the river nor venture outside, and was to be used in Hampton Roads and the Chesapeake. I stated these facts, and they with other matters had a good effect upon the President. But Stanton in his terror telegraphed to the governors of the Northern States and the mayors of some of the cities, warning them of the danger, and advising, as I was told, that rafts of timber and other obstructions should be placed at the mouths of the harbors.

These occurrences took place at different interviews which we had through the day and evening, for it was one of the many exciting Sundays which we had during the

Civil War. I received that evening a telegram from Dahlgren at the navy yard, stating he had secured a large number of boats and had a full force loading them with stone and gravel, and asking if he was acting in conformity with my wishes. I answered no, and that I had given no orders to sanction his proceedings. On the following morning we met at the President's, and Stanton, with affected calmness but his voice trembling with emotion, inquired if I had given orders to prevent the boats which he had provided from being prepared and loaded. I replied that I had given no orders to prepare and load any boats, nor did I intend to; that I had received a singular note from Dahlgren to which I had given this reply: that he had no authority from me for such work. Stanton said he had given the order to Meigs and Dahlgren, and had done it to protect Washington and with the approval of the President, to whom he turned. The President confirmed his statement, or remarked that Mr. Stanton had thought it imperative that something should immediately be done for our security; that those officers, Meigs and Dahlgren, one or both, were present, and he thought no harm would come of it, if it did no good. The purpose was to load fifty or sixty canal-boats and other craft with stone and sink them at Kettle Bottom Shoals, or some other place in the channel.

I stated that I was very sorry to hear it, that for five or six months we had labored with General McClellan and the War Department to keep this important avenue open to unrestricted navigation, and that, the Rebels having left, we ourselves were now to shut ourselves off by these obstructions. As the President had authorized the proceeding, I had nothing to say except to express my dissent the moment Admiral Dahlgren was told he might go forward with the work he had commenced under the War Department, and at its expense. Mr. Stanton said the War Department would bear both the expense and the responsibility.

The passages were sharp and pungent, and they were the last of that description which he ever used towards me. The occasion, the termination, and subsequent events appeared to have satisfied him that he had in some respects mistaken my true character. No member of the Cabinet did he thenceforward treat with more courtesy and consideration, and the roughness and something worse which he manifested towards some of our colleagues he never extended to me.

The result was he procured a fleet of some sixty canal-boats, which were laden, but Mr. Lincoln had forbidden, after our interview, that they should be sunk in the channel until it was known the Merrimac was approaching. Some weeks later, when the President, with Stanton and some others, was going down the river in a steamer, the long line of boats on the Maryland side near the Kettle Bottom Shoals attracted attention, and some one inquired concerning them. "Oh," said the President, "that is Stanton's navy. That is the fleet concerning which he and Mr. Welles became so excited in my room. Welles was incensed and opposed the scheme, and it has proved that Neptune was right. Stanton's navy is as useless as the paps of a man to a sucking child. There may be some show to amuse the child, but they are good for nothing for service."

I have narrated, at some length, what took place on an occasion of great interest to the country, and which brought out in strong light the traits of Mr. Stanton in a crisis, when he thought he had me at disadvantage and could exercise towards me his imperious nature. He saw that even under the excitement and alarm I treated his bluster with indifference, that the impression which each made upon the President was by no means to his advantage; and I have supposed was admonished to that effect by the President himself.

Mr. Stanton was fond of power and of its exercise. It was more precious to him than pecuniary gain to dominate over his fellow man. He took pleasure in being ungracious

and rough towards those who were under his control, and when he thought his bearish manner would terrify or humiliate those who were subject to him. To his superiors or those who were his equals in position, and who neither heeded nor cared for his violence, he was complacent, sometimes obsequious. From long association and close observation I am convinced he had but little moral courage nor much self-reliance when in trouble. It never struck me that he was mercenary or that he made use of his position to add to his private fortune, but he was reckless and regardless of public expenditure, and the war expenses were greater by hundreds of millions than was necessary, or than they would have been had the Department been in other hands.

Of his zeal, devotion, and great labor in his office there can be no question by those who were at all familiar with him as Secretary, although there are differences as to the wisdom of many of his measures and the value of his services. He was vigilant, often efficient, and his friend and patron Mr. Seward styled him the "Carnot of the War," "Stanton the Divine." But this was mere fulsome adulation from an old politician. With the resources of a nation in men and money at his command, and each used without stint or scruple, he might well be efficient and powerful, and no one better knew this than Stanton himself. He was an adept in intrigue and knew how to meet and move the leading spirits in Congress, and for that matter always had a little Congress of his own. No one courted the members with more assiduous attention, or, in an adroit way, flattered and pandered to them with more success. He did not, like Mr. Seward, to whom he was indebted for his greatness, entertain and feed them, yet Seward's parties were made subservient to Stanton and his views, and no one contributed more to it than Seward himself. The Secretary of State supposed, as did his predecessor Black, that Stanton was an appendage to him in the Administration, and they each, though diametrically opposed in their prin-

ciples and views of government, had a common interest in all that took place.

If an expenditure of the public money exceeding that of any minister in all history, either of our own or of any other country, makes one a great war minister, then Stanton may lay claim to greatness. A willing Congress, lavish of public money, readily granted all that he asked, and he was willing to ask all they would give. For a time the President was alarmed at his headlong career, but, finding that Stanton was sustained and glorified in his extravagance, he interposed no obstacles to the military measures and movements of the War Department.

When Mr. Stanton came into the War Department, for several months he assumed that the Navy was secondary and subject to the control and direction of the military branch of the Government. These pretensions, which had agitated each branch of the service, I never recognized, but stated that we were equal and would be ready at all times to coöperate with the armies in any demonstration, but it must not be under orders. If a movement originated in Washington, I claimed, if the Navy was to participate, I must be cognizant of it; if an expedition was undertaken by any general who needed the aid of the Navy, the admiral or senior naval officer on the station must be consulted and coöperation asked. Stanton claimed that, instead of consulting and asking, the military could order naval assistance, and that it was the duty of the Secretary of the Navy and of naval officers to render it. President Lincoln would not, however, lend himself to this view of the subject.

II

The President broaches the Subject of Emancipation — Navy Department Worries — Commodore Wilkes — Disappointed Officers — Seward's Assumption of Authority — How Lincoln chose his Cabinet — The Army's Failure to coöperate — The Military Theory of Frontiers — Promotion of W. D. Porter — Proposed Line of Gunboats on the Ohio — The Cabal against McClellan — Stanton on McClellan — The Need of Better Generals.

On Sunday, the 13th of July, 1862, President Lincoln invited me to accompany him in his carriage to the funeral of an infant child of Mr. Stanton. Secretary Seward and Mrs. Frederick Seward were also in the carriage. Mr. Stanton occupied at that time for a summer residence the house of a naval officer, I think Hazard, some two or three miles west, or northwest, of Georgetown. It was on this occasion and on this ride that he first mentioned to Mr. Seward and myself the subject of emancipating the slaves by proclamation in case the Rebels did not cease to persist in their war on the Government and the Union, of which he saw no evidence. He dwelt earnestly on the gravity, importance, and delicacy of the movement, said he had given it much thought and had about come to the conclusion that it was a military necessity absolutely essential for the salvation of the Union, that we must free the slaves or be ourselves subdued, etc., etc.

This was, he said, the first occasion when he had mentioned the subject to any one, and wished us to frankly state how the proposition struck us. Mr. Seward said the subject involved consequences so vast and momentous that he should wish to bestow on it mature reflection before giving a decisive answer, but his present opinion inclined to the measure as justifiable, and perhaps he might say expedient and necessary. These were also my views. Two or three times on that ride the subject, which was of

course an absorbing one for each and all, was adverted to, and before separating the President desired us to give the question special and deliberate attention, for he was earnest in the conviction that something must be done. It was a new departure for the President, for until this time, in all our previous interviews, whenever the question of emancipation or the mitigation of slavery had been in any way alluded to, he had been prompt and emphatic in denouncing any interference by the General Government with the subject. This was, I think, the sentiment of every member of the Cabinet, all of whom, including the President, considered it a local, domestic question appertaining to the States respectively, who had never parted with their authority over it. But the reverses before Richmond, and the formidable power and dimensions of the insurrection, which extended through all the Slave States, and had combined most of them in a confederacy to destroy the Union, impelled the Administration to adopt extraordinary measures to preserve the national existence. The slaves, if not armed and disciplined, were in the service of those who were, not only as field laborers and producers, but thousands of them were in attendance upon the armies in the field, employed as waiters and teamsters, and the fortifications and intrenchments were constructed by them.

August 10, 1862, *Sunday*. The last two days have been excessively warm. Thermometer on the north porch at 100 on each day. A slight breeze from the west makes this day somewhat more comfortable. News unimportant from the army, and but little from the Navy. Shall have something exciting within a few days. Sensation items are the favorite ones of the press. Alarming predictions delight their readers. Am sorry that better progress is not made in the war upon the Rebels. Our squadrons are paralyzed everywhere by the inactive and dilatory movements of the army. Vicksburg should have been taken by the first of June, but no adequate coöperating military force was

furnished, and as a consequence our largest squadron in the Gulf and our flotilla in the Mississippi have been detained and injured. The most disreputable naval affair of the War was the descent of the steam ram Arkansas through both squadrons till she hauled in under the batteries of Vicksburg, and there the two flag officers abandoned the place and the ironclad ram, Farragut and his force going down to New Orleans, and Davis proceeding with his flotilla up the river. I have written them both, briefly but expressively, on the subject of the ram Arkansas. I do not blame them in regard to Vicksburg, though had Farragut obeyed his original orders and gone up the river at once after the capture of New Orleans, I think things might have been different. Butler would not, I presume, give sufficient support from the army, for he has proved prompt as well as fearless.

We have sensation articles in yesterday's New York papers that the steamer Fingal at Savannah has been clad with iron and threatens our army and vessels. Have no word from Admiral Du Pont, who is watchful but slow to express apprehension. Am inclined to believe there is truth in the rumor that the boat has been clad with armor, but have my doubts if there is any immediate intention to attempt to pass outside. She is probably designed for river defense of the city against our gunboats; but may, if there is opportunity, assume the offensive. In the mean time the sensationalists will get up exciting alarms and terrify the public into distrust and denunciation of the Navy Department.

We have similar sensations every few days in regard to Merrimac No. 2, an armored boat at Richmond. As yet she has made no attempt to pass below the obstructions, though two or three times a week we are assured they are in sight, — "Smoke from half a dozen steam-stacks visible." Wilkes writes he is fully prepared for her and her associates at any time, and Rodgers [1] writes to the same

[1] Captain, afterwards Rear-Admiral, John Rodgers.

effect. But in a day or two some changes will take place that may affect operations on James River.

Have had to write Wilkes pretty decisively. He is very exacting towards others, but is not himself as obedient as he should be. Interposes his own authority to interrupt the execution of the orders of the Department. Wrote him that this was not permissible, that I expected his command to obey him, and it was no less imperative that he should obey the orders of the Department. He wrote for permission to dismiss from service a class of officers if they did not suit him, and as he thought them inefficient. I told him the suggestion could not be entertained, that the Department must retain the administrative control of the Navy. I have not heard from him in reply, or explanation. It is pretty evident that he will be likely to cause trouble to the Department. He has abilities but not good judgment in all respects. Will be likely to rashly assume authority, and do things that may involve himself and the country in difficulty, and hence I was glad that not I but the President and Secretary of State suggested him for that command. It is the first time that either has proposed a candidate for a command, since taking Stringham from the office of detail in 1861 to go to Pensacola. Seward's intrigue. It was almost a necessity that something should be done for Wilkes. His act, in taking Mason and Slidell from the Trent, had given him *éclat*, — it was popular with the country, was considered right by the people, even if rash and irregular; but when and how to dispose of Wilkes was an embarrassment to me, until the command of the James River Flotilla was suggested. He was, however, unwilling to report to Goldsborough, and to have done so would have caused delay. But giving him an independent command caused Goldsborough to take offense, and he asked to resign the command of the squadron. To this I had no objection, for he was proving himself inefficient, — had done nothing effective since the frigates were sunk by the Merrimac, nor of himself much before.

The State Department is in constant trepidation, fearing our naval officers do not know their duties, or that they will transcend them. Both points are marked weaknesses in the management of our foreign affairs. We are insulted, wronged, and badly treated by the British authorities, especially at Nassau, and I have called the attention of the Secretary of State repeatedly to the facts, but he fears to meet them. After degrading ourselves, we shall be compelled to meet them. I am for no rash means, but I am clearly and decidedly for maintaining our rights. Almost all the aid which the Rebels have received in arms, munitions, and articles contraband have gone to them through the professedly neutral British port of Nassau. From them the Rebels have derived constant encouragement and support, from the commencement of hostilities. Our officers and people are treated with superciliousness and contempt by the authorities and inhabitants, and scarcely a favor or courtesy is extended to them while they are showered upon the Rebels. It is there that vessels are prepared to run the blockade and violate our laws, by the connivance and with the knowledge of the Colonial, and, I apprehend, the parent, government.

In reorganizing the Department there are some difficulties. I am assailed for continuing Lenthall as Naval Constructor at the head of the bureau. He has not much pliability or affability, but, though attacked and denounced as corrupt and dishonest, I have never detected any obliquity or wrong in him. His sternness and uprightness disappointed the jobbers and the corrupt, and his unaffected manner has offended others. There is an intrigue to prevent his confirmation, in which very great rogues and some honest and good men are strangely mixed up, the last being the dupes, almost the willing victims, of the former.

Admiral Foote reported for duty on Thursday, but his rooms were not prepared, and I advised him, as he was yet lame and on crutches, to delay active duty for a month or

so. It is some forty years since we were school-boys together in the quiet town of Cheshire, and it has been a pleasant opportunity to me to bring out the qualities of my early friend. He left yesterday for a few weeks.

Mr. Faxon, Chief Clerk, is absent, and I am somewhat embarrassed in relation to the true disposition of the clerical force. It seems not to have occurred to Admiral Foote that he could not appoint whom he pleased in his bureau, regardless of the claims and capabilities of older and more experienced clerks on less pay. I told him I wished him to have the selection of his chief or at least one confidential clerk, but that I could not displace old and worthy employees. This he said he did not wish, though he was, I think, a little disappointed.

Davis continues in command of the flotilla on the Mississippi. Had he captured the Arkansas, I would have had him come on immediately and take charge of the Bureau of Navigation.

In reorganizing the Navy under the late act, there were nine admirals to be appointed on the retired list. The names of nine were presented, but the Senate failed to confirm or act upon them. After the adjournment of Congress, commissions were sent them under executive appointment. Of course the men superseded were dissatisfied. Aulick was the first who called, complaining that injustice was done, and desiring to know wherein his record was defective and why he had been set aside. I told him that had it been the intention of Congress that the nine senior officers should be the admirals, the act would doubtless have so stated; that as regarded himself, while, personally, our relations had been pleasant if not intimate, he had not made himself known or felt by the Department or the Government in the hour of peril; that he had, just as the Rebellion commenced, applied for six months' leave to visit Europe, on account of alleged illness of his daughter; that he left about the time of the assault on Sumter; that he remained abroad until notified that his

leave would not be extended, and never had made a suggestion for the country, or expressed any sympathy for the cause. Under these circumstances I had felt justified in advising the President to omit his name. He said he had supposed it was other influences than mine which had done him this injustice, that we had been long and well acquainted. I told him I shunned no responsibility in the case, and yet it was due to candor to say that I never had heard a word in his behalf from any one.

Commodore Mervine writes me of his disappointment, feels hurt and slighted. By the advice of Paulding, chiefly, I gave the command of the Gulf Squadron to Mervine in the spring of 1861; but he proved an utter failure. He is not wanting in patriotism, but in executive and administrative ability; is quite as great on little things as on great ones. He was long in getting out to his station, and accomplished nothing after he got there. When I detached him and appointed McKean, he was indignant and applied for a court of inquiry; but I replied that we had not the time nor men to spare, that I had called him to promote the public interest, and recalled him for the same purpose. He is a man of correct deportment and habits, and in ordinary times would float along the stream with others, but such periods as these bring out the stronger points of an officer, if he has them. I had no personal, or political, or general, feeling against him, but as there were other officers of mark and merit superior to him, they were selected. Yet I felt there could not be otherwise than a sense of slight that must be felt by himself and friends, which I could not but regret. Yet any person with whom I consulted commended the course I pursued in regard to him.

Commodore Samuel Breese was a more marked case than Mervine's, but of much the same character. Nothing good, nothing bad, in him as an officer. A gentleman of some scholarly pretensions, some literary acquirements, but not of much vigor of mind. Paulding was his junior,

and the slight, as he conceived it, almost broke poor Breese's heart. He came immediately to Washington, accompanied by his wife, a pleasant woman, and called on me, sad and heartsore, his pride wounded, his vanity humiliated to the dust. For three nights he assured me he had not closed his eyes; morning and evening the flag of Paulding was always before him. He said Read would not live long and implored that he might have the place.

Charles Stewart, first on the list and the oldest officer in the service, wrote, requesting the permission of the President to decline the appointment. It is a singular letter, and required a singular answer, which I sent him, leaving the subject in his hands.

The Advisory Board, which had to pass on subordinate active appointments, have completed their labors the past week. I am not altogether satisfied with their action, and perhaps should not be with any board, when so much was to be done, and so many men to pass under revision. The omission of Selfridge and Porter (W. D.) were perhaps the most marked cases, and the promotion of Fleming and Poor the most objectionable.

In the action of this board I have taken no part, but scrupulously abstained from any conversation with its members, directly or indirectly. I did say to Assistant Secretary Fox that I regretted the action in the case of the elder Selfridge and Walke, and I think he must have intimated these views in regard to W., for the action of the board was subsequently reversed. But I know not how this may have been.

Had a letter last evening from Lieutenant Budd, stating that he presented me with a chair rumored to have belonged to General Washington, which was captured on the Steamer Memphis, and asking me to accept it. Admiral Paulding had written me there was such a chair, which he had carried to his house, and asking what should be done with it. The chair was private property and sent by a lady to some one abroad, for friendly feeling to the Rebels.

I sent word to Admiral P. that the captors could donate it or it might be sold with the other parts of the cargo. It is, I apprehend, of little intrinsic value. If it really belonged to Washington, it seemed to me impolitic to sell it at auction as a Rebel capture; if not Washington's, there should be no humbug. My impressions were that it might be given to Admiral P. or to the Commandant's House at the navy yard, and I am inclined to think I will let it take the latter course, at least for the present.

Governor Buckingham was here last week, and among other matters had in view the selection of Collectors and Assessors for our State. There was great competition. The State ticket was headed by Howard, and the Congress ticket headed by Goodman. While personally friendly to all, my convictions were for the State ticket, which was moreover much the ablest. The Secretary of the Treasury gave it the preference but made three alterations.

I met Senator Dixon the next day at the Executive Mansion, he having come on to Washington with express reference to these appointments. He has written me several letters indicating much caution, but I saw at once that he was strongly committed and exceedingly disappointed. He promised to see me again, but left that P.M. to get counter support.

Intelligence reaches us this evening that the Rebel ironclad ram Arkansas has been destroyed. We have also news of a fight yesterday on the Rapidan by forces under General Pope, the Rebels commanded by Stonewall Jackson.

Was told confidentially to-day that a treaty had been brought about between Thurlow Weed and Bennett of the *Herald*, after a bitterness of twenty years. A letter was read to me giving the particulars. Weed had word conveyed to Bennett that he would like to make up. Bennett thereupon invited Weed to Fort Washington. Weed was shy; sent word that he was engaged the evening named, which was untrue. Bennett then sent a second invitation, which was accepted; and Weed dined and stayed for the

night at Fort Washington, and the *Herald* directly changed its tune.

August 11, *Monday.* A busy day, reading and preparing dispatches. State Department is sensitively apprehensive that our naval officers will not be sufficiently forbearing towards Englishmen. The old error, running back to the commencement of difficulties, when the Rebels were recognized as belligerents, and a blockade was ordered instead of closing the ports. We are not, it is true, in a condition for war with Great Britain just at this time, but England is in scarcely a better condition for a war with us. At all events, continued and degrading submission to aggressive insolence will not promote harmony nor self-respect. It is a gratification to me that our naval officers assert our rights. I have no fears they will trespass on the rights of others. Full dispatches received from Admiral Farragut, who has got his larger vessels down the river to New Orleans. I had been under apprehensions that the Mississippi was getting so low he would experience difficulty.

August 12, *Tuesday.* I called early this morning on the Secretary of State touching a communication of his of the 8th inst. which I received yesterday, in which I am directed in the name of the President to give instructions of an extraordinary character to our naval officers, instructions which I do not approve, and which in one or two points conflict with law and usage. Though the direction was in the President's name, I learned he knew nothing of the proceeding.

Mr. Seward has a passion to be thought a master spirit in the Administration, and to parade before others an exhibition of authority which if permitted is not always exercised wisely or intelligently. Englishmen have complained that their vessels were detained and searched, and that they have experienced great inconvenience by the delay in the transmission of letters by blockade-runners.

These matters having been brought before the Secretary of State, he on the instant, without consultation with any one, without investigation, without being aware he was disregarding law and long-settled principles, volunteered to say he would mitigate or remedy the grievance, would put the matter right; and, under the impulse of the moment and with an ostentatious show of authority which he did not possess, yielded all that was asked and more than the Englishmen had anticipated or than the Secretary was authorized to give. I saw that he had acted precipitately and inconsiderately, and was soon aware that the President, in whose name he assumed to act, was uninformed on the subject. But Seward is committed and cannot humiliate himself to retrace his steps. I gave him to understand, however, I would send out no such instructions as he had sent me in the President's name; that we had, under the belligerent right of search, authority to stop any suspected vessel, and if she had contraband on board to capture her; that no blockade-runner ever cleared for a Rebel port, like Charleston, though that might be its actual destination, but for Halifax, Nassau, or some neutral port; that the idea of surrendering mails and letters captured on blockade-runners to foreign consuls, officers, and legations, instead of delivering them, as the law explicitly directs, to the courts, could not be entertained for a moment. Seward suggested that I could so modify the proposed instructions as to make them conform to the law, which he admitted he had not examined. Said it would relieve him and do much to conciliate the Englishmen, who were troublesome, and willing to get into difficulty with us. It will be useless to see the President, who will be alarmed with the bugaboo of a foreign war, a bugbear which Seward well knows how to use. These absurd instructions do not originate with the President, yet, relating to foreign matters, he will endorse them, I have no doubt, under the appeals which Seward will make.

Nothing of special interest to-day in the Cabinet. Some

gentlemen — Roseleas, Coltman, and Bullitt of Louisiana — were with the President when I called. He was reading some printed letters as to the policy which the Union men of Louisiana, for whom they appeared, should pursue. He did not think it wise or expedient for them to shrink from an honest and open avowal of their principles and purpose, assured them that rallying earnestly for the Government and the service would be the surest way to restore tranquillity.

Had a long private letter from Commodore Wilkes, who deplores recent orders in regard to the army under McClellan; thinks it suicidal. I fear there is truth in his apprehensions.

August 15, *Friday*. Received yesterday a note from Chase that the President proposed to change two of the nominees under the new tax law in Connecticut. Called on the President, and stated to him I did it as a duty, that duty alone impelled me. He said he fully believed it, and was glad to do me the justice to say that in matters of appointments, patronage, I had never given him any trouble.

Having an appointment this Friday morning at 9 with the President, I met there Babcock [1] and Platt [2] of Connecticut. They had called and stated their case, which was extremely unjust to Mr. Howard, and, turning to me, Mr. B. said H. claimed he had procured or secured my appointment. The President said he had a slight acquaintance with Mr. H. himself. Had met him in Illinois and knew him as a friend of mine. Had received letters from him expressing regard for me, and one signed jointly by H. and Senator Dixon. But these gentlemen did not originate his action in relation to my appointment. "The truth is," said he, — "and I may as well state the facts to you, for others know them, — on the day of the Presidential elec-

[1] James F. Babcock, editor of the New Haven *Palladium*. Lincoln appointed him Collector at New Haven.

[2] O. H. Platt, subsequently United States Senator.

tion, the operator of the telegraph in Springfield placed his instrument at my disposal. I was there without leaving, after the returns began to come in, until we had enough to satisfy us how the election had gone. This was about two in the morning of Wednesday. I went home, but not to get much sleep, for I then felt, as I never had before, the responsibility that was upon me. I began at once to feel that I needed support, — others to share with me the burden. This was on Wednesday morning, and before the sun went down I had made up my Cabinet. It was almost the same that I finally appointed. One or two changes were made, and the particular position of one or two was unsettled. My mind was fixed on Mr. Welles as the member from New England on that Wednesday. Some other names passed through my thoughts, and some persons were afterwards pressed upon me, but the man and the place were fixed in my mind then, as it now is. My choice was confirmed by Mr. H., by Senator Dixon, Preston King, Vice-President Hamlin, Governor Morgan, and others, but the selection was my own, and not theirs, and Mr. H. is under a mistake in what he says."

August 16, *Saturday*. With the President an hour or two this A.M., selecting candidates from a large number recommended for midshipmen at the naval school.

Finished a set of instructions for our naval officers in matters relating to prize captures and enforcing the blockade. Mr. Seward sent me a few days since in the name of the President some restraining points on which he wished the officers to be instructed, but I was convinced they would work injury. Have toned down and modified his paper, relieved it of its illegal features, added one or two precautionary points and sent the document to the State Department for criticism and suggestions.

Mem. It may be well, if I can find time, to get up a complete set of instructions, defining the points of international and statute law which are disputed or not well understood.

Have a long telegram from Wilkes, who informs me that the army has left, and asking for instructions what to do now that McClellan has gone. I have not been advised of army movements by either the Secretary of War or General Halleck. Both are ready at all times to call for naval aid, but are almost wholly neglectful of the Navy and of their own duties in regard to it, as in this instance.

August 17, *Sunday*. Called this morning on General Halleck, who had forgotten or was not aware there was a naval force in the James River coöperating with the army. He said the army was withdrawn and there was no necessity for the naval vessels to remain. I remarked that I took a different view of the question, and, had I been consulted, I should have advised that the naval and some army forces should hold on and menace Richmond, in order to compel the Rebels to retain part of their army there while our forces in front of Washington were getting in position. He began to rub his elbows, and, without thanking me or acknowledgment of any kind, said he wished the vessels could remain. Telegraphed Wilkes to that effect. Strange that this change of military operations should have been made without Cabinet consultation, and especially without communicating the fact to the Secretary of the Navy, who had established a naval flotilla on the James River by special request to coöperate with and assist the army. But Stanton is so absorbed in his scheme to get rid of McClellan that other and more important matters are neglected.

A difficulty has existed from the beginning in the military, and I may say general, management of the War. At a very early day, before even the firing on Sumter and the abandonment of Norfolk, I made repeated applications to General Scott for one or two regiments to be stationed there. Anticipating the trouble that subsequently took place, and confident that, with one regiment well commanded and a good engineer to construct batteries, with

the coöperation of the frigate Cumberland and such small additional naval force as we could collect, the place might be held at least until the public property and ships could be removed, I urged the importance of such aid. The reply on each occasion was that he not only had no troops to spare from Washington or Fortress Monroe, both of which places he considered in great danger, but that if he had, he would not send a detachment in what he considered enemy's country, especially as there were no intrenchments. I deferred to his military character and position, but remonstrated against this view of the case, for I was assured, and, I believe, truly, that a majority of the people in the navy yard and in the vicinity of Norfolk were loyal, friends of the Union and opposed to Secession. He said that might be the political, but was not the military, aspect, and he must be governed by military considerations in disposing of his troops.

There was but one way of overcoming these objections and that was by peremptory orders, which I could not, and the President would not, give, in opposition to the opinions of General Scott. The consequence was the loss of the navy yard and of Norfolk, and the almost total extinguishment of the Union sentiment in that quarter. Our friends there became cool and were soon alienated by our abandonment. While I received no assistance from the military in that emergency, I was thwarted and embarrassed by the secret interference of the Secretary of State in my operations. General Scott was for a defensive policy, and the same causes which influenced him in that matter, and the line of policy which he marked out, have governed the educated officers of the army and to a great extent shaped the war measures of the Government. "We must erect our batteries on the eminences in the vicinity of Washington," said General Mansfield to me, "and establish our military lines; frontiers between the belligerents, as between the countries of Continental Europe, are requisite." They were necessary in order to adapt and

reconcile the theory and instruction of West Point to the war that was being prosecuted. We should, however, by this process become rapidly two hostile nations. All beyond the frontiers must be considered and treated as enemies, although large sections, and in some instances whole States, have a Union majority, occasionally in some sections approximating unanimity.

Instead of halting on the borders, building intrenchments, and repelling indiscriminately and treating as Rebels — enemies — all, Union as well as disunion, men in the insurrectionary region, we should, I thought, penetrate their territory, nourish and protect the Union sentiment, and create and strengthen a national feeling counter to Secession. This we might have done in North Carolina, western Virginia, northern Alabama and Georgia, Arkansas, Texas, and in fact in large sections of nearly every seceding State. Instead of holding back, we should be aggressive and enter their territory. Our generals act on the defensive. It is not and has not been the policy of the country to be aggressive towards others, therefore defensive tactics, rather than offensive have been taught, and the effect upon our educated commanders in this civil war is perceptible. The best material for commanders in this civil strife may have never seen West Point. There is something in the remark that a good general is "born to command." We have experienced that some of our best-educated officers have no faculty to govern, control, and direct an army in offensive warfare. We have many talented and capable engineers, good officers in some respects, but without audacity, desire for fierce encounter, and in that respect almost utterly deficient as commanders. Courage and learning are essential, but something more is wanted for a good general, — talent, intuition, magnetic power, which West Point cannot give. Men who would have made the best generals and who possess innately the best and highest qualities to command may not have been so fortunate as to be selected by a Member of Congress to be a cadet.

Jackson and Taylor were excellent generals, but they were not educated engineers, nor were they what would be considered in these days accomplished and educated military men. They detailed and availed themselves of engineers, and searched out and found the needed qualities in others.

We were unused to war when these present difficulties commenced, and have often permitted men of the army to decide questions that were more political than military. There is still the same misfortune, — for I deem it such.

From the beginning there was a persistent determination to treat the Rebels as alien belligerents, — as a hostile and distinct people, — to blockade, instead of closing, their ports. The men "duly accredited by the Confederate States of America" held back-door intercourse with the Secretary of State, and lived and moved in ostentatious style in Washington for some weeks. Thus commencing, other governments had reason to claim that we had initiated them into the belief that the Federal Government and its opponents were two nations; and the Union people of the South were, by this policy of our Government and that of the army, driven, compelled against their wishes, to be our antagonists.

No man in the South could avow himself a friend of the Union without forfeiting his estate, his liberty, and perhaps his life under State laws of the Confederates. The Federal Government not only afforded him no protection, but under the military system of frontiers he was treated as a public enemy because he resided in his own home at the South.

August 18, *Monday.* Had a call to-day from an old schoolmate at Cheshire, now a chaplain in the army, Joseph H. Nichols. Invited and had him to tea with me and talked over school-boy days. It is thirty-five years or over since we have met, though not unfrequently in the same place.

Sent Commodore Wilkes a dispatch to hold his ground

and await events. Will send him specific orders when developments justify. He is a troublesome officer in many respects, unpopular in the Navy and never on good terms with the Department, yet I have thus far got along with him very well, though in constant apprehension that he will commit some rash act. He is ambitious, self-conceited, and self-willed. The withdrawal of the army from before Richmond disconcerts him, and to make his mark he may do some indiscreet, rash, and indefensible act. But I trust not. He has abilities but not sound judgment, and is not always subordinate, though he is himself severe and exacting towards his subordinates.

Had a letter from Fox at Portsmouth. Says there are traitors even there. It will be necessary that the Government should be felt as a power before this Rebellion can be suppressed. The armored boats, to which he was to give some attention, are progressing as well as can be expected. . . .

August 20, *Wednesday. Memo.* Soon after hostilities commenced, in the spring or summer of 1861, a letter from William D. Porter to his son was published. The son had joined the Rebels, and so informed his father, who wrote him he thought he had committed a mistake. But, having taken this step, he advised him to adhere and do his duty. At that time W. D. P. was on duty in the Pacific. I immediately detached and ordered him home. He reported to me in great distress; disavowed the letter; said it was a forgery, that his son and himself were on bad terms and the letter had been written and published to injure him. There was, he informed me, much disagreement in the family; his son had been alienated from him, and, like David, sympathized with the Secessionists, while he (W.) had taken the opposite course. David, he remarked, was the intimate friend of Jefferson Davis and the Rebel conspirators, and he had expected that he would act with them, and he had no doubt that David's course had

injured him; confounding him with D., he was made accountable for D.'s acts. David said he had no doubt that Bill wrote the letter, and I was of that opinion.[1] William had, not without reason, the reputation of being very untruthful, — a failing of the Porters, for David was not always reliable on unimportant matters, but amplified and colored transactions, where he was personally interested especially, but he had not the bad reputation of William. I did not always consider David to be depended upon if he had an end to attain, and he had no hesitation in trampling down a brother officer if it would benefit himself. He had less heart than William.

Had a conversation with the President in relation to W. D. Porter, who was the efficient officer that attacked and destroyed the Rebel armored ram Arkansas. Porter is a bold, brave man, but reckless in many respects, and unpopular, perhaps not without reason, in the service. He has been earnest and vigorous on the Mississippi, and made himself. The Advisory Board under the late law omitted to recommend him for promotion. It was one of the few omissions that I regretted, for whatever the infirmities of the man I recognize his merits as an officer.

His courage in destroying the Arkansas was manifest. Both the flag officers were delinquent in the matter of that vessel at Vicksburg, and I so wrote each of them. Admiral Farragut cannot conceal his joy that she is destroyed, but is not ready to do full justice to Porter.

I canvassed the whole question, — the law, the proceedings, the difficulties, the man, the officer, the responsibility of promoting him and of my advising it, — yet I felt it a duty, if service rendered in battle and under fire were to govern. The President conversed with me most fully, and said, "I am so satisfied that you are right generally, and

[1] I some years later, and after William's death, learned from Admiral Farragut and Mrs. Farragut that they knew the letter to be a forgery and that it was got up for mischievous purposes. — G. W.

in this case particularly, that I say to you, Go ahead, give Porter as you propose a Commodore's appointment, and I will stand by you, come what may."

Sent a letter of reproof to Colonel Harris and also one to Lieutenant-Colonel Reynolds of the Marine Corps, between whom there is a bitter feud. Almost all the elder officers are at loggerheads and ought to be retired. Reynolds had been tried by court martial on charges preferred by Harris, and acquitted, though by confessions made to me personally guilty. But a majority of the anti-Harris faction constituted the court, and partisanship, not merit, governed the decision. I refused to approve the finding. In his turn, Reynolds brought charges against Harris, and of such a character as to implicate others. To have gone forward would have been to plunge into a series of courts martial for a year to come.

McClellan's forces have left the banks of James River several days since. Their exodus I think was not anticipated at Richmond, nor believed until after all had left and crossed the Chickahominy. We are beginning to hear of the arrival of the advance guard at Acquia Creek, Alexandria, and Fredericksburg. In the mean time Pope is being heavily pressed at Culpeper by Stonewall Jackson and the whole accumulated forces from Richmond, which has compelled him to fall back on the left bank of the Rapidan, his policy being to keep the enemy in check until McClellan's forces can unite with him.

August 22, *Friday.* The President tells me he has a list of the number of new recruits which have reached Washington under the late call. Over 18,000 have arrived in just one week. There is wonderful and increasing enthusiasm and determination to put down this Rebellion and sustain the integrity of the Union. It is confined to no class or party or description: rich and poor, the educated and ignorant, the gentle and refined as well as the stout, coarse, and athletic, the Democrats generally as

well as the Republicans, are offering themselves to the country.

Governor Dennison and Judge Swayne[1] of Ohio, with others, are urging in person the establishment of a line of armed and armored steamers on the Ohio River. The plan has been elaborated with much care, and has been before presented and pressed with some zeal. Distrust, no doubt, in regard to army management leads these men to seek naval protection. The Blairs are quoted to me as favoring the movement, and Fox has given them encouragement. It has not found favor with me at any time. It is now brought to my attention in such a way that I am compelled to take it up. I find that great names and entire communities in Ohio and Indiana, led on by the authorities of those States, are engaged in it. I told the principal agent, who, with Governor D., had a long interview with me, that my judgment and convictions were against it, for: First: I had no faith that light-draft gunboats would be a safe and reliable means of frontier river-defense. They might be auxiliary and essential aids to the army, but they cannot carry heavy armament, are frail, and in low stages of the water, with high banks which overlook the river, would not be effective and could hardly take care of themselves, though in certain cases, and especially in high water, they might greatly aid the army. Secondly: As a matter of policy it would be injudicious and positively harmful to establish a frontier line between Ohio and Kentucky, making the river the military boundary, — it would be conceding too much. If a line of boats could assist in protecting the northern banks of the Ohio they could afford little security to the southern banks, where, as in Ohio, there is, except in localities, a majority for the Union. I added that I should be opposed to any plan which proposed to establish frontier lines, therein differing from some of our best army officers; that I thought neither Ohio nor Indiana could, on deliberate consideration, wish the

[1] Noah H. Swayne, of the United States Supreme Court.

line of separation from hostile forces should be the northern boundary of Kentucky. It appeared to me the true course was to make their interest in this war identical with that of Kentucky, and if there were to be a line of demarcation it should be as far south as the southern boundary of Tennessee, and not the banks of the Ohio. The gentlemen seemed to be impressed with these general views.

August 24, *Sunday*. Have a dispatch from General Burnside at Falmouth, calling earnestly for five or six gunboats in the Potomac at Acquia Creek. Mentions having made a personal application at the Navy Department. Nothing has been said to me by him or any one, nor has any requisition been made. I find, however, on inquiry, that in a general conversation in the room of the Chief Clerk he expressed something of the kind. The General feels that a heavy responsibility is upon him, and in case of disaster desires like others the protection of the gunboats. It is honorable to him that, unlike some other generals, he willingly gives credit to the Navy. The protection he now seeks is a wise precaution, perhaps, but, I apprehend, wholly unnecessary. I have, however, ordered Wilkes to send round five gunboats from James River. The War Department sends me a letter from Major-General Curtis to General Halleck, requesting more gunboats on the Western rivers. Wrote Admiral Davis that the navigation of the Mississippi should be kept unobstructed, not only between Memphis and Arkansas River but elsewhere, and to coöperate with and assist the army.

August 25, *Monday*. Wrote Wilkes, preparatory to discontinuing the organization of the James River Flotilla as a distinct organization. Received from him, after it was written, an unofficial letter communicating a plan of offensive operations. Directed him in reply to engage in no scheme whereby the gunboats would be detained in James River longer than the army absolutely needed them

to divert the attention of the Rebels and prevent them from sending their whole force against General Pope before General McClellan could reach him. The change of the plan of operations is a military movement, suggested and pushed by Chase and Stanton. It will be a great disappointment to Wilkes as well as others, but there is no remedy. As soon as the gunboats can be released we want them elsewhere. They have been locked up in James River for two months, when they should have been on other duty. McClellan's tardy policy has been unfortunate for himself and the country. It has strengthened the combination against him. Faxon[1] showed me a letter from Admiral Foote which I was sorry to read, evincing a petulance that is unworthy of him, and proposing to relinquish his bureau appointment, if he cannot control the selection of certain clerks.

August 27, *Tuesday.* Called on the Attorney-General in relation to the appointment of a chaplain, — a singular case. When the Cumberland was sunk in March last, and a considerable portion of her crew, it was supposed the chaplain was lost. This fact brought a large flock of clerical gentlemen to Washington for the place. The first who reached here was Rev. K. of Germantown, and the President in the kindness of his heart wrote a note requesting that Mr. K. might, if there was nothing to prevent, have the place of the supposed drowned. It was not certain, however, that there was a vacancy, — we were daily hearing of escaped victims who were preserved, — and duty forbade an immediate appointment. Congress, before adjourning, enacted a law that no person should be appointed chaplain who was over thirty-five. Mr. K. is forty-eight, but, unwilling to relinquish the place, he pressed the President with his friends and procured from him another letter, directing the appointment to be made now, if it was one that could have been made then. On bringing this to me,

[1] William Faxon, Chief Clerk of the Navy Department.

I told the reverend gentleman it was in disregard of the law, and could not be made in my opinion; that I must at all events see the President before any steps were taken and advise him of the facts.

This I did, and by his request called on the Attorney-General. That gentleman, as I expected, requests a written application for his opinion.

Have a letter from Admiral Foote, who has thought a second time of his conclusions in his letter to Mr. Faxon, expresses regret, and very handsomely apologizes. I had expected this; should have been disappointed in the man if he had not made it.

August 31, *Sunday*. For the last two or three days there has been fighting at the front and army movements of interest. McClellan with most of his army arrived at Alexandria a week or more ago, but inertness, inactivity, and sluggishness seem to prevail. The army officers do not engage in this move of the War Department with zeal. Some of the troops have gone forward to join Pope, who has been beyond Manassas, where he has encountered Stonewall Jackson and the Rebel forces for the last three days in a severe struggle. The energy and rapid movements of the Rebels are in such striking contrast to those of our own officers that I shall not be seriously surprised at any sudden dash from them. The War Department — Stanton and Halleck — are alarmed. By request, and in anticipation of the worst, though not expecting it, I have ordered Wilkes and a force of fourteen gunboats, including the five light-draft asked for by Burnside, to come round into the Potomac, and have put W. in command of the flotilla here, disbanding the flotilla on the James.

Yesterday, Saturday, P.M., when about leaving the Department, Chase called on me with a protest addressed to the President, signed by himself and Stanton, against continuing McClellan in command and demanding his immediate dismissal. Certain grave offenses were enumerated.

Chase said that Smith had seen and would sign it in turn, but as my name preceded his in order, he desired mine to appear in its place. I told him I was not prepared to sign the document; that I preferred a different method of meeting the question; that if asked by the President, and even if not asked, I was prepared to express my opinion, which, as he knew, had long been averse to McClellan's dilatory course, and was much aggravated from what I had recently learned at the War Department; that I did not choose to denounce McC. for incapacity, or to pronounce him a traitor, as declared in this paper, but I would say, and perhaps it was my duty to say, that I believed his removal from command was demanded by public sentiment and the best interest of the country.

Chase said that was not sufficient, that the time had arrived when the Cabinet must act with energy and promptitude, for either the Government or McClellan must go down. He then proceeded to expose certain acts, some of which were partially known to me, and others, more startling, which were new to me. I said to C. that he and Stanton were familiar with facts of which I was ignorant, and there might therefore be propriety in their stating what they knew, though in a different way, — facts which I could not indorse because I had no knowledge of them. I proposed as a preferable course that there should be a general consultation with the President. He objected to this until the document was signed, which, he said, should be done at once.

This method of getting signatures without an interchange of views with those who are associated in council was repugnant to my ideas of duty and right. When I asked if the Attorney-General and Postmaster-General had seen the paper or been consulted, he replied not yet, their turn had not come. I informed C. that I should desire to advise with them in so important a matter; that I was disinclined to sign the paper; did not like the proceeding; that I could not, though I wished McClellan removed

GEORGE B. McCLELLAN

after what I had heard, and should have no hesitation in saying so at the proper time and place and in what I considered the right way. While we were talking, Blair came in. Chase was alarmed, for the paper was in my hand and he evidently feared I should address B. on the subject. This, after witnessing his agitation, I could not do without his consent. Blair remained but a few moments; did not even take a seat. After he left, I asked Chase if we should not call him back and consult him. C. said in great haste, "No, not now; it is best he should for the present know nothing of it." I took a different view; said that there was no one of the Cabinet whom I would sooner consult on this subject, that I thought Blair's opinion, especially on military matters, he having had a military education, very correct. Chase said this was not the time to bring him in. After Chase left me, he returned to make a special request that I would make no allusion concerning the paper to Blair or any one else.

Met, by invitation, a few friends last evening at Baron Gerolt's.[1] My call was early, and, feeling anxious concerning affairs in front, I soon excused myself to go to the War Department for tidings. Found Stanton and Caleb Smith alone in the Secretary's room. The conduct of McClellan was soon taken up; it had, I inferred, been under discussion before I came in.

Stanton began with a statement of his entrance into the Cabinet in January last, when he found everything in confusion, with unpaid bills on his table to the amount of over $20,000,000 against the Department; his inability, then or since, to procure any satisfactory information from McClellan, who had no plan nor any system. Said this vague, indefinite uncertainty was oppressive; that near the close of January he pressed this subject on the President, who issued the order to him and myself for an advance on the 22d of February. McClellan began at once to interpose objections, yet did nothing, but talked always

[1] The Prussian Minister.

vaguely and indefinitely and of various matters except those immediately in hand. The President insisted on, and ordered, a forward movement. Then McClellan stated he intended a demonstration on the upper waters of the Potomac, and boats for a bridge were prepared with great labor and expense. He went up there and telegraphed back that two or three officers — his favorites — had done admirably in preparing the bridge and he wished them to be brevetted. The whole thing was absurd, eventuated in nothing, and he was ordered back.

The President then commanded that the army should proceed to Richmond. McClellan delayed, hesitated, said he must go by way of the Peninsula, would take transports at Annapolis. In order that he should have no excuse, but without any faith in his plan, Stanton said he ordered transports and supplies to Annapolis. The President, in the mean time, urged and pressed a forward movement towards Manassas. Spoke of its results, — the wooden guns, the evacuation by the Rebels, who fled before the General came, and he did not pursue them but came back to Washington. The transports were then ordered round to the Potomac, where the troops were shipped to Fortress Monroe. The plans, the number of troops to proceed, the number that was to remain, Stanton recounted. These arrangements were somewhat deranged by the sudden raid of Jackson towards Winchester, which withdrew Banks from Manassas, leaving no force between Washington and the Rebel army at Gordonsville. He then ordered McDowell and his division, also Franklin's command, to remain, to the great grief of McDowell, who believed glory and fighting were all to be with the grand army. McClellan had made the withholding of this necessary force to protect the seat of government his excuse for not being more rapid and effective; was constantly complaining. The President wrote him how, by his arrangement, only 18,000 troops, remnants and odd parcels, were left to protect the Capital. Still McClellan was complaining and underrating

his forces; said he had but 96,000, when his own returns showed he had 123,000. But, to stop his complaints and drive him forward, the President finally, on the 10th of June, sent him McCall and his division, with which he promised to proceed at once to Richmond, but did not, lingered along until finally attacked. McClellan's excuse for going by way of the Peninsula was that he might have good roads and dry ground, but his complaints were unceasing, after he got there, of bad roads, water, and swamps.

When finally ordered, after his blunders and reverses, to withdraw from James River, he delayed obeying the order for thirteen days, and never did comply until General Burnside was sent to supersede him if he did not move.

Since his arrival at Alexandria, Stanton says, only delay and embarrassment had governed him. General Halleck had, among other things, ordered General Franklin's division to go forward promptly to support Pope at Manassas. When Franklin got as far as Annandale he was stopped by McClellan, against orders from Headquarters. McClellan's excuse was he thought Franklin might be in danger if he proceeded farther. For twenty-four hours that large force remained stationary, hearing the whole time the guns of the battle that was raging in front. In consequence of this delay by command of McClellan, against specific orders, he apprehended our army would be compelled to fall back.

Smith left whilst we were conversing after this detailed narrative, and Stanton, dropping his voice, though no one was present, said he understood from Chase that I declined to sign the protest which he had drawn up against McClellan's continuance in command, and asked if I did not think we ought to get rid of him. I told him I might not differ with him on that point, especially after what I had heard in addition to what I had previously known, but that I disliked the method and manner of proceeding, that it appeared to me an unwise and injudicious proceeding, and was discourteous and disrespectful to the

President, were there nothing else. Stanton said, with some excitement, he knew of no particular obligations he was under to the President, who had called him to a difficult position and imposed upon him labors and responsibilities which no man could carry, and which were greatly increased by fastening upon him a commander who was constantly striving to embarrass him in his administration of the Department. He could not and would not submit to a continuance of this state of things. I admitted they were bad, severe on him, and he could and had stated his case strongly, but I could not from facts within my own knowledge indorse them, nor did I like the manner in which it was proposed to bring about a dismissal. He said among other things General Pope telegraphed to McClellan for supplies; the latter informed P. they were at Alexandria, and if P. would send an escort he could have them. A general fighting, on the field of battle, to send to a general in the rear and in repose an escort!

Watson, Assistant Secretary of War, repeated to me this last fact this morning, and reaffirmed others. He informs me that my course on a certain occasion had offended McClellan and was not approved by others; but that both the President and Stanton had since, and now, in their private conversation, admitted I was right, and that my letter in answer to a curt and improper demand of McClellan last spring was proper and correct. Watson says he always told the President and Stanton I was right, and he complimented me on several subjects, which, though gratifying, others can speak of and judge better than myself.

We hear, this Sunday morning, that our army has fallen back to Centreville.[1] Pope writes in pretty good spirits that we have lost no guns, etc. The Rebels were largely reinforced, while our troops, detained at Annandale by McClellan's orders, did not arrive to support our wearied and exhausted men. McClellan telegraphs that he hears "Pope is badly cut up." Schenck, who had a wound

[1] After the defeat in the Second Battle of Bull Run.

in his arm, left the battle-field, bringing with him for company an Ohio captain. Both arrived safe at Willard's. They met McCall on the other side of Centreville and Sumner on this side. Late! late!

Up to this hour, 1 P.M., Sunday, no specific intelligence beyond the general facts above stated. There is considerable uneasiness in this city, which is mere panic. I see no cause for alarm. It is impossible to feel otherwise than sorrowful and sad over the waste of life and treasure and energies of the nation, the misplaced confidence in certain men, the errors of some, perhaps the crimes of others, who have been trusted. But my faith in present security and of ultimate success is unshaken. We need better generals but can have no better army. There is much latent disloyal feeling in Washington which should be expelled. And oh, there is great want of capacity and will among our military leaders.

I hear that all the churches not heretofore seized are now taken for hospital purposes; private dwellings are taken to be thus used, among others my next neighbor Corcoran's[1] fine house and grounds. There is malice in this. I told General Halleck it was vandalism. He admitted it would be wrong. Halleck walked over with me from the War Department as far as my house, and is, I perceive, quite alarmed for the safety of the city; says that we overrate our own strength and underestimate the Rebels' — a fatal error in Halleck. This has been the talk of McClellan, which none of us have believed.

[1] William W. Corcoran, the banker, who among other public benefactions gave the city of Washington the art gallery which bears his name.

III

After the Second Battle of Bull Run — Another Anti-McClellan Paper — The Opinion about General Pope — Wilkes and McClellan — McClellan's Remarks about South Carolina and Massachusetts — The Bickerings of the Generals — The President's Opinion of McClellan and Pope — Rumors of a Proposed Revolution — An Estimate of Halleck — Panic-stricken New York — A Scheme to deport Slaves to Chiriqui — The "West Point" Policy — An Estimate of Stanton — Lincoln's Deference to Seward — The Administration of the Departments — The Want of a Military Policy — Lincoln and Seward — How Cabinet-Meetings were conducted — The Rivalry of Seward and Chase — News of Antietam — Dismissal of Commander Preble — The Emancipation Proclamation read to the Cabinet — Senator John P. Hale — Chase's Financial Policy — Chase's Opinion of Stanton — The Chiriqui Scheme — New York Politics — European Efforts to break the Blockade.

September 1, *Monday.* The wounded have been coming in to-day in large numbers. From what I can learn, General Pope's estimate of the killed and wounded greatly exceeds the actual number. He should, however, be best informed, but he feels distressed and depressed and is greatly given to exaggeration.

Chase tells me that McClellan sends word that there are twenty thousand stragglers on the road between Alexandria and Centreville, which C. says is infamously false and sent out for infamous purposes. He called on me to-day with a more carefully prepared, and less exceptionable, address to the President, stating the signers did not deem it safe that McClellan should be intrusted with an army, etc., and that, if required, the signers would give their reasons for the protest against continuing him in command. This paper was in the handwriting of Attorney-General Bates. The former was in Stanton's. This was signed by Stanton, Chase, Smith, and Bates. A space was left between the two last for Blair and myself; Seward is not in town, and, if I am not mistaken, is purposely absent to be

relieved from participation in this movement, which originates with Stanton, who is mad — perhaps with reason — and determined to destroy McClellan. Seward and Stanton act in concert, but Seward has opposed or declined being a party to the removal of McClellan, until since Halleck was brought here, when Stanton became more fierce and determined. Seward then gave way and went away. Chase, who has become hostile to McClellan, is credulous, and sometimes the victim of intrigue; was taken into Stanton's confidence, made to believe that the opportunity of Seward's absence should be improved to shake off McClellan, whom they both disliked, by a combined Cabinet movement to control the President, who, until recently, has clung to that officer. It was not difficult, under the prevailing feeling of indignation against McClellan, to enlist Smith. I am a little surprised that they got Mr. Bates, though he has for some time openly urged the removal of McClellan. Chase took upon himself to get my name, and then, if possible, Blair was to be brought in. In all this, Chase flatters himself that he is attaching Stanton to his interest; not but that he is himself sincere in his opposition to McClellan, who was once his favorite, but whom he considers a deserter from his faction and whom he now detests.

I told Chase I thought this paper an improvement on the document of Saturday; was less exceptionable; but I did not like, and could not unite in, the movement; that in a conference with the President I should have no hesitation in saying or agreeing mainly in what was there expressed; for I am satisfied the earnest men of the country would not be willing McClellan should hereafter have command of our forces in the field, though I could not say what is the feeling of the soldiers. Reflection had more fully satisfied me that this method of conspiring to influence or control the President was repugnant to my feelings and was not right; it was unusual, would be disrespectful, and would justly be deemed offensive; that the President had

called us around him as friends and advisers, with whom he might counsel and consult on all matters affecting the public welfare, not to enter into combinations to control him. Nothing of this kind had hitherto taken place in our intercourse. That we had not been sufficiently intimate, impressive, or formal perhaps, and perhaps not sufficiently explicit and decisive in expressing our views on some subjects.

Chase disclaimed any movement against the President and thought the manner was respectful and correct. Said it was designed to tell the President that the Administration must be broken up, or McC. dismissed. The course he said was unusual, but the case was unusual. We had, it was true, been too informal in our meeting. I had, he said, been too reserved in the expression of my views, which he did me the compliment to say were sound, etc. Conversations, he said, amounted to but little with the President on subjects of this importance. Argument was useless. It was like throwing water on a duck's back. A more decisive expression must be made and that in writing.

It was evident there was a fixed determination to remove, and if possible to disgrace, McClellan. Chase frankly stated he desired it, that he deliberately believed McClellan ought to be shot, and should, were he President, be brought to summary punishment. I told him he was aware my faith in McClellan's energy and reliability was shaken nine months ago; that as early as last December I had, as he would recollect, expressed my disappointment in the man and stated to him specially, as the friend and indorser of McClellan, my misgivings, in order that he might remove my doubts or confirm them. McClellan's hesitating course last fall, his indifference and neglect of my many applications to coöperate with the Navy, his failure in many instances to fulfill his promises, when the Rebels were erecting batteries on the west bank of the Potomac, that they might close the navigation of the river, had shaken my confidence in his efficiency and reliability, for

he was not deficient in sagacity or intelligence. But at that time McClellan was a general favorite, and neither he (Chase) nor any one heeded my doubts and apprehensions.

A few weeks after the navigation of the river was first interrupted by the Rebel batteries last November, I made known to the President and Cabinet how I had been put off by General McClellan with broken promises and frivolous and unsatisfactory answers, until I ceased conversing with him on the subject. To me it seemed he had no plan or policy of his own, or any realizing sense of the true condition of affairs, — the Rebels in sight of us, almost within cannon-range, Washington beleaguered, only a single railroad track to Baltimore, the Potomac about to be closed. He was occupied with reviews and dress-parades, perhaps with drills and discipline, but was regardless of the necessities of the case, — the political aspect of the question, the effect of the closing of the only avenue from the National Capital to the ocean, and the embarrassment which would follow to the Government itself were the river blockaded. Though deprecating his course and calling his attention to it, I did not think, as Chase now says he does, and as I hear others say they do, that he was imbecile, a coward, a traitor; but it was notorious that he hesitated, doubted, had not self-reliance, any definite and determined plan, or audacity to act. He was wanting, in my opinion, in several of the essential requisites of a general in chief command; in short, he was not a fighting general. These are my present convictions. Some statements of Stanton and some recent acts indicate failings, delinquencies of a more serious character. The country is greatly incensed against him, but he has the confidence of the army, I think.

Chase was disappointed, and I think a little chagrined, because I would not unite in the written demand to the President. He said he had not yet asked Blair and did not propose to till the others had been consulted. This does

not look well. It appears as if there was a combination by two to get their associates committed, *seriatim*, in detail, by a skillful *ex parte* movement without general consultation.

McClellan was first invited to Washington under the auspices of Chase, more than of any one else, though all approved, for Scott was old, infirm, and changeable. Seward soon had greater intimacy with McClellan than Chase. Blair, informed in regard to the qualities of army officers, acquiesced in McClellan's selection; thought him intelligent and capable, but dilatory. In the winter, when Chase began to get alienated from McC. in consequence of his hesitancy and reticence, or both, if not because of greater intimacy with Seward, Blair seemed to confide more in the General, yet I do not think McC. was a favorite, or that he grew in favor.

September 2, *Tuesday*. At Cabinet-meeting all but Seward were present. I think there was design in his absence. It was stated that Pope, without consultation or advice, was falling back, intending to retreat within the Washington intrenchments. No one seems to have had any knowledge of his movements, or plans, if he had any. Those who have favored Pope are disturbed and disappointed. Blair, who has known him intimately, says he is a braggart and a liar, with some courage, perhaps, but not much capacity. The general conviction is that he is a failure here, and there is a belief and admission on all hands that he has not been seconded and sustained as he should have been by McClellan, Franklin, Fitz John Porter, and perhaps some others. Personal jealousies and professional rivalries, the bane and curse of all armies, have entered deeply into ours.

Stanton said, in a suppressed voice, trembling with excitement, he was informed McClellan had been ordered to take command of the forces in Washington. General surprise was expressed. When the President came in and

heard the subject-matter of our conversation, he said he had done what seemed to him best and would be responsible for what he had done to the country. Halleck had agreed to it. McClellan knows this whole ground; his specialty is to defend; he is a good engineer, all admit; there is no better organizer; he can be trusted to act on the defensive; but he is troubled with the "slows" and good for nothing for an onward movement. Much was said. There was a more disturbed and desponding feeling than I have ever witnessed in council; the President was greatly distressed. There was a general conversation as regarded the infirmities of McClellan, but it was claimed, by Blair and the President, he had beyond any officer the confidence of the army. Though deficient in the positive qualities which are necessary for an energetic commander, his organizing powers could be made temporarily available till the troops were rallied.

These, the President said, were General Halleck's views, as well as his own, and some who were dissatisfied with his action, and had thought H. was the man for General-in-Chief, felt that there was nothing to do but to acquiesce, yet Chase earnestly and emphatically stated his conviction that it would prove a national calamity.

Pope himself had great influence in bringing Halleck here, and the two, with Stanton and Chase, got possession of McC.'s army and withdrew it from before Richmond. It has been an unfortunate movement. Pope is denounced as a braggart, unequal to the position assigned him.

Stanton and Halleck are apprehensive that Washington is in danger. Am sorry to see this fear, for I do not believe it among remote possibilities. Undoubtedly, after the orders of Pope to fall back, and the discontent and contentions of the generals, there will be serious trouble, but not such as to endanger the Capital. The military believe a great and decisive battle is to be fought in front of the city, but I do not anticipate it. It may be that, retreating within the intrenchments, our own generals and managers

have inspired the Rebels to be more daring; perhaps they may venture to cross the upper Potomac and strike at Baltimore, our railroad communication, or both, but they will not venture to come here, where we are prepared and fortified with both army and navy to meet them.

In a conversation with Commodore Wilkes, who came up yesterday from Norfolk to take command of the Potomac Flotilla, consisting now of twenty-five vessels, he took occasion to express his high appreciation of McClellan as an officer. This can be accounted for in more ways than one. The two have been associated together in a severe disappointment, and persuade themselves they should have accomplished something important if they had not been interrupted. I have no doubt Wilkes, who has audacity, would have dashed on, and perhaps have compelled McClellan to do so, but with what prudence and discretion I am not assured. They both believe they would have taken Richmond. I apprehend they would have disagreed before getting there, even if McClellan could have been brought to the attempt. An adverse result has made them friends in belief, and they condemn the decision which led to their recall. I had no part in that decision. Probably should not have advised the order had I been consulted, although it may have been the proper military step. But whether recalled or not, McC. would never have struck a blow for Richmond, even under the impulsive urging of Wilkes, who is often inconsiderate; and so strife would have arisen between them.

Wilkes says they would have captured Richmond on the 1st inst., had there been no recall. His last letter to me, about the 27th, said they would have made an attempt by the 12th if let alone. I have no doubt that, could he have had the coöperation of the army, Wilkes would have struck a blow; perhaps he would alone.

September 3, *Wednesday*. Washington is full of exciting, vague, and absurd rumors. There is some cause for it. Our

great army comes retreating to the banks of the Potomac, driven back to the intrenchments by Rebels.

The army has no head. Halleck is here in the Department, a military director, not a general, a man of some scholastic attainments, but without soldierly capacity. McClellan is an intelligent engineer and officer, but not a commander to head a great army in the field. To attack or advance with energy and power is not in him; to fight is not his forte. I sometimes fear his heart is not earnest in the cause, yet I do not entertain the thought that he is unfaithful. The study of military operations interests and amuses him. It flatters him to have on his staff French princes and men of wealth and position; he likes show, parade, and power. Wishes to outgeneral the Rebels, but not to kill and destroy them. In a conversation which I had with him in May last at Cumberland on the Pamunkey, he said he desired of all things to capture Charleston; he would demolish and annihilate the city. He detested, he said, both South Carolina and Massachusetts, and should rejoice to see both States extinguished. Both were and always had been ultra and mischievous, and he could not tell which he hated most. These were the remarks of the General-in-Chief at the head of our armies then in the field, and when as large a proportion of his troops were from Massachusetts as from any State in the Union, while as large a proportion of those opposed, who were fighting the Union, were from South Carolina as from any State. He was leading the men of Massachusetts against the men of South Carolina, yet he, the General, detests them alike.

I cannot relieve my mind from the belief that to him, in a great degree, and to his example, influence, and conduct are to be attributed some portion of our late reverses, more than to any other person on either side. His reluctance to move or have others move, his inactivity, his detention of Franklin, his omission to send forward supplies unless Pope would send a cavalry escort from the battle-field, and the tone of his conversation and dispatches, all show a moody

state of feeling. The slight upon him and the generals associated with him, in the selection of Pope, was injudicious, impolitic, wrong perhaps, but is no justification for their withholding one tithe of strength in a great emergency, where the lives of their countrymen and the welfare of the country were in danger. The soldiers whom McClellan has commanded are doubtless attached to him. They have been trained to it, and he has kindly cared for them while under him. With partiality for him thay have imbibed his prejudices, and some of the officers have, I fear, a spirit more factious and personal than patriotic. I have thought they might have reason to complain, at the proper time and place, but not on the field of battle, that a young officer of no high reputation should be brought from a Western Department and placed over them. Stanton, in his hate of McC., has aggrieved other officers.

The introduction of Pope here, followed by Halleck, is an intrigue of Stanton's and Chase's to get rid of McClellan. A part of this intrigue has been the withdrawal of McClellan and the Army of the Potomac from before Richmond and turning it into the Army of Washington under Pope.

Chase, who made himself as busy in the management of the army as the Treasury, said to the President one day in my presence, when we were looking over the maps on the table in the War Department, that the whole movement upon Richmond by the York River was wrong, that we should accomplish nothing until the army was recalled and Washington was made the base of operations for an overland march. McClellan had all the troops with him, and the Capital was exposed to any sudden blow from the Rebels. "What would you do?" said the President. "Order McClellan to return and start right," replied Chase, putting his finger on the map, and pointing the course to be taken across the country. Pope, who was present, said, "If Halleck were here, you would have, Mr. President, a competent adviser who would put this matter right."

The President, without consulting any one, went about

this time on a hasty visit to West Point, where he had a brief interview with General Scott, and immediately returned. A few days thereafter General Halleck was detached from the Western Department and ordered to Washington, where he was placed in position as General-in-Chief, and McClellan and the Army of the Potomac, on Halleck's recommendation, first proposed by Chase, were recalled from in the vicinity of Richmond.

The defeat of Pope and placing McC. in command of the retreating and disorganized forces after the second disaster at Bull Run interrupted the intrigue which had been planned for the dismissal of McClellan, and was not only a triumph for him but a severe mortification and disappointment for both Stanton and Chase.

September 4, *Thursday*. City full of rumors and but little truth in any of them.

Wilkes laid before me his plan for organizing the Potomac Flotilla. It is systematic and exhibits capacity.

Something energetic must be done in regard to the suspected privateers which, with the connivance of British authorities, are being sent out to depredate on our commerce. We hear that our new steamer, the Adirondack, is wrecked. She had been sent to watch the Bahama Channel. Her loss, the discharge of the Oreto by the courts of Nassau, and the arrival of Steamer 290,[1] both piratical British wolves, demand attention, although we have no vessels to spare from the blockade. Must organize a flying squadron, as has been suggested, and put Wilkes in command. Both the President and Seward request he should go on this service.

When with the President this A.M., heard Pope read his statement of what had taken place in Virginia during the last few weeks, commencing at or before the battle of Cedar Mountain. It was not exactly a bulletin nor a report, but a manifesto, a narrative, tinged with wounded pride and

[1] The cruiser Alabama.

a keen sense of injustice and wrong. The draft, he said, was rough. It certainly needs modifying before it goes out, or there will be war among the generals, who are now more ready to fight each other than the enemy. No one was present but the President, Pope, and myself. I remained by special request of both to hear the report read. Seward came in for a moment, but immediately left. He shuns these controversies and all subjects where he is liable to become personally involved. I have no doubt Stanton and Chase have seen the paper, and Seward, through Stanton, knows its character.

Pope and I left together and walked to the Departments. He declares all his misfortunes are owing to the persistent determination of McClellan, Franklin, and Porter, aided by Ricketts, Griffin, and some others who were predetermined he should not be successful. They preferred, he said, that the country should be ruined rather than he should triumph.

September 5, *Friday*. We have a report this morning that the Rebels have crossed the Potomac at Edwards Ferry, but the War Department says the report wants confirmation and that we have no stragglers from there, as we should have if the rumors were true.

Wilkes claims that he ought to have the position of Acting Admiral. There is reason in his claim, though some are opposed to it. He is not in favor with his professional brethren, has given great trouble and annoyance to the Department heretofore and will be likely to give us more trouble, but I believe it best to give him under the circumstances the position with the squadron.

. . . . . .

The question of publishing the report of General Pope was before us. Some little discussion took place. I did not consider it strictly a report, for it was not accompanied by the reports of the other officers, or any statistics of killed, wounded, losses, or captures, but a statement from an

officer in command, who felt himself aggrieved and who expressed himself in a manner to give offense. Much was said, and all concurred or acquiesced in non-publication for the present, especially as there is to be an inquiry into the subject-matter reported upon.

There is a good deal of demoralization in the army; officers and soldiers are infected.

September 6, *Saturday*. We have information that the Rebels have crossed the Potomac in considerable force, with a view of invading Maryland and pushing on into Pennsylvania. The War Department is bewildered, knows but little, does nothing, proposes nothing.

Our army is passing north. This evening some twenty or thirty thousand passed my house within three hours. There was design in having them come up from Pennsylvania Avenue to H Street, and pass by McClellan's house, which is at the corner of H and 15th. They cheered the General lustily, instead of passing by the White House and honoring the President.

Have unpleasant information concerning privateers, which are getting abroad by connivance of the British authorities. Am trying to get Wilkes off as speedily as possible. Wrote out his orders and instructions this evening to cruise with a squadron in the Bahamas and West Indies for certain vessels of no recognized nationality that were preparing to prey on our commerce. Will get them copied and in his hands on Monday. As an additional hint, told him to-day I wished he could get off on Monday.

McClellan and his partisans have ascendency in the army, but he has lost ground in the confidence of the country, chiefly from delays, or what the President aptly terms the "slows."

September 7. The report prevalent yesterday that the Rebels had crossed the upper Potomac at or near the Point of Rocks is confirmed, and it is pretty authentic that large reinforcements have since been added.

Found Chase in Secretary's room at the War Department with D. D. Field. No others present. Some talk about naval matters. Field censorious and uncomfortable. General Pope soon came in but stayed only a moment. Was angry and vehement. He and Chase had a brief conversation apart, when he returned to Stanton's room.

When I started to come away, Chase followed, and after we came down stairs asked me to walk with him to the President's. As we crossed the lawn, he said with emotion everything was going wrong. He feared the country was ruined. McClellan was having everything his own way, as he (Chase) anticipated he would if decisive measures were not promptly taken for his dismissal. It was a reward for perfidy. My refusal to sign the paper he had prepared was fraught with great evil to the country. I replied that I viewed that matter differently. My estimate of McClellan was in some respects different from his. I agreed he wanted decision, that he hesitated to strike, had also behaved badly in the late trouble, but I did not believe he was unfaithful and destitute of patriotism. But aside from McClellan, and the fact that it would, with the feeling which pervaded the army, have been an impolitic step to dismiss him, the proposed combination in the Cabinet would have been inexcusably wrong to the President. We had seen the view which the President took of the matter and how he felt at the meeting of the Cabinet on Tuesday.

From what I have seen and heard within the last few days, the more highly do I appreciate the President's judgment and sagacity in the stand he made, and the course he took. Stanton has carried his dislike or hatred of McC. to great lengths, and from free intercourse with Chase has enlisted him, and to some extent influenced all of us against that officer, who has failings enough of his own to bear without the addition of Stanton's enmity to his own infirmities. Seward, in whom McC. has confided more than any member of the Administration, from the common belief that Seward was supreme, yielded to Stanton's malignant

feelings, and yet, not willing to encounter that officer, he went off to Auburn, expecting the General would be disposed of whilst he was away. The President, who, like the rest of us, has seen and felt McClellan's deficiencies and has heard Stanton's and Halleck's complaints more than we have, finally, and I think not unwillingly, consented to bring Pope here in front of Washington; was also further persuaded by Stanton and Chase to recall the army from Richmond and turn the troops over to Pope. Most of this originated, and has been matured, in the War Department, Stanton and Chase being the pioneers, Halleck assenting, the President and Seward under stress of McClellan's disease "the slows," and with the reverses before Richmond, falling in with the idea that a change of commanders and a change of base was necessary. The recall of the army from the vicinity of Richmond I thought wrong, and I know it was in opposition to the opinion of some of the best military men in the service. Placing Pope over them roused the indignation of many. But in this Stanton had a purpose to accomplish, and in bringing first Pope here, then by Pope's assistance and General Scott's advice bringing Halleck, and concerting measures which followed, he succeeded in breaking down and displacing McClellan, but not in dismissing and disgracing him. This the President would not do or permit to be done, though he was more offended with McC. than he ever was before. In a brief conversation with him as we were walking together on Friday, the President said with much emphasis: "I must have McClellan to reorganize the army and bring it out of chaos, but there has been a design, a purpose in breaking down Pope, without regard of consequences to the country. It is shocking to see and know this; but there is no remedy at present, McClellan has the army with him."

My convictions are with the President that McClellan and his generals are this day stronger than the Administration with a considerable portion of this Army of the Potomac. It is not so elsewhere with the soldiers, or in the

country, where McClellan has lost favor. The people are disappointed in him, but his leading generals have contrived to strengthen him in the hearts of the soldiers in front of Washington.

Chase and myself found the President alone this Sunday morning. We canvassed fully the condition of the army and country. Chase took an early opportunity, since the report of Pope was suppressed, to urge upon the President the propriety of some announcement of the facts connected with the recent battles. It was, he said, due to the country and also to Pope and McDowell. I at once comprehended why Chase had invited me to accompany him in this visit. It was that it might appear that we were united on this mission. I therefore promptly stated that this was the first time I had heard the subject broached. At a proper time, it seemed to me, there would be propriety in presenting a fair, unprejudiced, and truthful statement of late disasters. The country craved to know the facts, but the question was, Could we just now with prudence give them? Disclosing might lead to discord and impair the efficiency of the officers. The President spoke favorably of Pope, and thought he would have something prepared for publication by Halleck.

When taking a walk this Sunday evening with my son Edgar, we met on Pennsylvania Avenue, near the junction of H Street, what I thought at first sight a squad of cavalry or mounted men, some twenty or thirty in number. I remarked as they approached that they seemed better mounted than usual, but E. said the cavalcade was General McClellan and his staff. I raised my hand to salute him as they were dashing past, but the General, recognizing us, halted the troop and rode up to me by the sidewalk, to shake hands, he said, and bid me farewell. I asked which way. He said he was proceeding to take command of the onward movement. "Then," I added, "you go up the river." He said yes, he had just started to take charge of the army and of the operations above. "Well," said I,

"onward, General, is now the word; the country will expect you to go forward." "That," he answered, "is my intention." "Success to you, then, General, with all my heart." With a mutual farewell we parted.

This was our first meeting since we parted at Cumberland on the Pamunkey in June, for we each had been so occupied during the three or four days he had been in Washington that we had made no calls. On several occasions we missed each other. In fact, I had no particular desire to fall in with any of the officers who had contributed to the disasters that had befallen us, or who had in any respect failed to do their whole duty in this great crisis. While McClellan may have had some cause to be offended with Pope, he has no right to permit his personal resentments to inflict injury upon the country. I may do him injustice, but I think his management has been generally unfortunate, to say the least, and culpably wrong since his return from the Peninsula.

He has now been placed in a position where he may retrieve himself, and return to Washington a victor in triumph, or he may, as he has from the beginning, wilt away in tame delays and criminal inaction. I would not have given him the command, nor have advised it, strong as he is with the army, had I been consulted; and I feel sad that he has been so intrusted. It may, however, be for the best. There are difficulties in the matter that can scarcely be appreciated by those who do not know all the circumstances. The army is, I fear, much demoralized, and its demoralization is much of it to be attributed to the officers whose highest duty it is to prevent it. To have placed any other general than McClellan, or one of his circle, in command would be to risk disaster. It is painful to entertain the idea that the country is in the hands of such men. I hope I mistake them.

September 8, *Monday*. Less sensation and fewer rumors than we have had for several days.

The President called on me to know what we had authentic of the destruction of the Rebel steamer in Savannah River. He expressed himself very decidedly concerning the management or mismanagement of the army. Said, "We had the enemy in the hollow of our hands on Friday, if our generals, who are vexed with Pope, had done their duty; all of our present difficulties and reverses have been brought upon us by these quarrels of the generals." These were, I think, his very words. While we were conversing, Collector Barney of New York came in. The President said, perhaps before B. came, that Halleck had turned to McClellan and advised that he should command the troops against the Maryland invasion. "I could not have done it," said he, "for I can never feel confident that he will do anything effectual." He went on, freely commenting and repeating some things said before B. joined us. Of Pope he spoke in complimentary terms as brave, patriotic, and as having done his duty in every respect in Virginia, to the entire satisfaction of himself and Halleck, who both knew and watched, day and night, every movement. On only one point had Halleck doubted any order P. had given; that was in directing one division, I think Heintzelman's, to march for the Chain Bridge, by which the flanks of that division were exposed. When that order reached him by telegraph, Halleck was uneasy, for he could not countermand it in season, because the dispatch would have to go part of the way by courier. However, all went off without disaster; the division was not attacked. Pope, said the President, did well, but there was here an army prejudice against him, and it was necessary he should leave. He had gone off very angry, and not without cause, but circumstances controlled us.

Barney said he had mingled with all descriptions of persons, and particularly with men connected with the army, and perhaps could speak from actual knowledge of public sentiment better than either of us. He was positive that no one but McClellan could do anything just now with this

army. He had managed to get its confidence, and he meant to keep it, and use it for his own purposes. Barney proceeded to disclose a conversation he had with Barlow some months since. Barlow, a prominent Democratic lawyer and politician of New York, had been to Washington to attend one of McClellan's grand reviews when he lay here inactive on the Potomac. McClellan had specially invited Barlow to be present, and during this visit opened his mind, said he did not wish the Presidency, would rather have his place at the head of the army, etc., etc., intimating he had no political views or aspirations. All with him was military, and he had no particular desire to close this war immediately, but would pursue a line of policy of his own, regardless of the Administration, its wishes and objects.

The combination against Pope was, Barney says, part of the plan carried out, and the worst feature to him was the great demoralization of his soldiers. They were becoming reckless and untamable. In these remarks the President concurred, and said he was shocked to find that of 140,000 whom we were paying for in Pope's army only 60,000 could be found. McClellan brought away 93,000 from the Peninsula, but could not to-day count on over 45,000. As regarded demoralization, the President said, there was no doubt that some of our men permitted themselves to be captured in order that they might leave on parole, get discharged, and go home. Where there is such rottenness, is there not reason to fear for the country?

Barney further remarked that some very reliable men were becoming discouraged, and instanced Cassius M. Clay, who was advocating an armistice and terms of separation or of compromise with the Rebels. The President doubted if Clay had been rightly understood, for he had had a full and free talk with him, when he said had we been successful we could have had it in our power to offer terms.

In a conversation this morning with Chase, he said it was a doubtful matter whether my declining to sign the

paper against McClellan was productive of good or harm. If I had done it, he said, McClellan would have been disposed of and not now in command, but the condition of the army was such under his long manipulation that it might have been hazardous at this juncture to have dismissed him. I assured him I had seen no moment yet when I regretted my decision, and my opinion of McClellan had undergone no change. He has military acquirements and capacity, dash, but has not audacity, lacks decision, delays, hesitates, vacillates; will, I fear, persist in delays and inaction and do nothing affirmative. His conduct during late events aggravates his indecision and is wholly unjustifiable and inexcusable.

But I will not prophesy what he will do in his present command. He has a great opportunity, and I hope and pray he may improve it. The President says truly he has the "slows," but he can gather the army together better than any other man. Let us give him credit when he deserves it.

September 10, *Wednesday*. Colonel Marston of New Hampshire, who has been with the Army of the Potomac for a year, called on me to-day. Says he has no confidence in McClellan as a general; thinks him neither brave nor capable; expresses distrust of the integrity and patriotism of other generals also. Marston is not a brilliant or great man, nor perhaps a very competent military critic to judge of the higher qualifications of his superiors; but he is politically patriotic, and gives the opinion of others with whom he associates as well as his own.

Senator Wilson, who is by nature suspicious and sensational, tells me there is a conspiracy on foot among certain generals for a revolution and the establishment of a provisional national government. Has obtained important information from one of McC.'s staff. Wilson is doubtless sincere in all this, but, being on the military committee, is influenced by Stanton, who is mad with the army and

officers who stand by McClellan. There may have been random talk and speculation among military men when idle in camp, but there is nothing serious or intentional in their loose remarks. They and the soldiers are citizens. The government and country is theirs as well as ours.

Secretary Smith says he has heard of these movements. Imputes misfortune and mismanagement to one (Seward) who has the ear of the President and misadvises and misleads him.

H. H. Elliott, Chairman of the Prize Commission in New York, writes me that the public mind there is highly excited and on the eve of revolution. There is, undoubtedly, a bad state of things in New York, and he is surrounded by that class of Democratic partisans whose sympathies and associations were with the Rebels, and who are still party opponents of the Administration.

There are muttering denunciations on every side, and if McClellan fails to whip the Rebels in Maryland, the wrath and indignation against him and the Administration will be great and unrestrained. If he succeeds, there will be instant relief, and a willing disposition to excuse alleged errors which ought to be investigated.

General Halleck is nominally General-in-Chief and discharging many of the important functions of the War Department. I have as yet no intimacy with him and have seen but little of him. He has a scholarly intellect and, I suppose, some military acquirements, but his mind is heavy and irresolute. It appears to me he does not possess originality and that he has little real military talent. What he has is educational. He is here, and came from the West, the friend of Pope, and is in some degree indebted to Pope for his position. Both were introduced here by an intrigue of the War and Treasury with the design of ultimately displacing McClellan, to whom the President has adhered with tenacity, and from whom Stanton alone and unassisted could not alienate him. The President was distressed by McClellan's tardy movements and failure

before Richmond, but did not understand the object which the Secretary of War, seconded by Chase, had in view, nor perhaps did either of the two generals, Pope and Halleck, whose capabilities were wonderfully magnified by Stanton, when ordered here. Pope is a connection of Mrs. Lincoln and was somewhat intimate with the President, with whom he came to Washington in 1861. There were some wonderful military operations on the Mississippi and at Corinth reported of him just before he was ordered here, and which led to it, that have not somehow been fully substantiated. Admiral Foote used to laugh at the gasconade and bluster of Pope. Halleck, Foote insisted, was a military imbecile, though he might make a good clerk. Pope was first brought here, and soon began to second Stanton by sounding the praises of Halleck. On one or two occasions I heard him express his admiration of the extraordinary capacity of Halleck and his wish that H. could be on this field, where his great abilities would comprehend and successfully direct military operations. Stanton would on these occasions back Pope so far as to hope there could be some change. The President listened, was influenced, and finally went to West Point and saw General Scott. Chase had in the mean time abandoned McClellan, and I well remember the vehement earnestness with which, on one occasion when we were examining the maps and criticizing operations before Richmond, he maintained with emphasis we had begun wrong, and could have no success until the army was brought back here, and we started from this point to reach the James River.

How far Halleck was assenting to or committed to Stanton's implacable hostility to McClellan, or whether he was aware of its extent before he came here, I cannot say. Shortly after he arrived I saw that he partook of the views of Stanton and Chase. By direction of the President he visited the army on the James and became a partner to the scheme for the recall of the troops. This recall or withdrawal he pronounced one of the most difficult things to

HENRY W. HALLECK

achieve successfully that an accomplished commander could execute. The movement was effected successfully, but I did not perceive that the country was indebted to General Halleck in the least for that success. The whole thing at Headquarters was slovenly managed. I know that the Navy, which was in the James River coöperating with the army, was utterly neglected by Halleck. Stanton, when I made inquiry, said the order to bring back the army was not his, and he was not responsible for that neglect. I first learned of the order recalling the army, not from the General-in-Chief or the War Department, but from Wilkes, who was left upon the upper waters of the James without orders and a coöperating army. When I called on Halleck, with Wilkes's letter, he seemed stupid, said there was no further use for the Navy, supposed I had been advised by the Secretary of War. When I suggested that it appeared to me important that the naval force should remain, with perhaps a small number of troops to menace Richmond, he rubbed his elbow first, as if that was the seat of thought, and then his eyes, and said he wished the Navy would hold on for a few days to embarrass the Rebels, but he had ordered all the troops to return. I questioned then, and do now, the wisdom of recalling McClellan and the army; have doubted if H., unprompted, would himself have done it. It was a specimen of Chase's and Stanton's tactics. They had impressed the President with their ideas that a change of base was necessary. The President had, at the beginning, questioned the movement on Richmond by way of the Peninsula, but Blair had favored it.

Pope having been put in command of the army in front of Washington, it was not difficult to reinforce him with McClellan's men. Stanton, intriguing against that officer, wanted to exclude him from command. Chase seconded the scheme, but, fearing the influence of McClellan with the President and the other generals and the army, the plan of his dismissal at the instigation of the Cabinet was

projected. McClellan, by an unwise political letter, when his duty was military, weakened himself and strengthened his enemies. Events must have convinced him that there was an intrigue against him, that he was in disfavor. Perhaps he was conscious that he had failed to come up to public expectation and do his whole duty. He certainly committed the great error, if not crime, after Halleck's appointment and his recall, of remaining supine, inactive, at Alexandria while the great battle was going on in front; and he imparted his own disaffected feelings to his subordinates.

Halleck, destitute of originality, bewildered by the conduct of McClellan and his generals, without military resources, could devise nothing and knew not what to advise or do after Pope's discomfiture. He saw that the dissatisfied generals triumphed in Pope's defeat, that Pope and the faction that Stanton controlled against McClellan were unequal to the task they were expected to perform, and, distrustful of himself, Halleck, without consulting Stanton, assented to the President's suggestion of reinstating McClellan in the intrenchments to reorganize the shattered forces; and subsequently recommended giving him again the command of the consolidated armies of Washington and the Potomac.

The President assured me that this appointment of McClellan to command the united forces and the onward movement was Halleck's doings. He spoke of it in justification of the act. I was sorry he should permit General H. to select the commander in such a case if against his own judgment. But the same causes which influenced H. probably had some effect on the President, and Stanton, disappointed and vexed, beheld his plans miscarry and felt that his resentments were impotent, at least for a time.

September 11, *Thursday*. I find it difficult to hurry Wilkes off with his command. The public, especially the commercial community, are impatient; but Wilkes, like many officers, having got position, likes to exhibit himself and

snuff incense. He assumed great credit for promptness, and has sometimes shown it, but not on this occasion. Has been fussing about his vessel until I had, to-day, to give him a pretty peremptory order.

Men in New York, men who are sensible in most things, are the most easily terrified and panic-stricken of any community. They are just now alarmed lest an ironclad steamer may rush in upon them some fine morning while they are asleep and destroy their city. In their imagination, under the teachings of mischievous persons and papers, they suppose every Rebel cruiser is ironclad, while in fact the Rebels have not one ironclad afloat. It only requires a sensation paragraph in the *Times* to create alarm. The *Times* is controlled by Seward through Thurlow Weed, and used through him by Stanton. Whenever the army is in trouble and public opinion sets against its management, the *Times* immediately sets up a howl against the Navy.

Senator Pomeroy of Kansas called yesterday in relation to a scheme, or job, for deporting slaves and colored people to Chiriqui. I cautioned him against committing himself or the Government to Thompson, or any corporation or association. Let him know my opinion of Thompson's project and my opposition to it. Advised him, if anything was seriously and earnestly designed, to go to the Government of New Granada or any of the Spanish-American States and treat with them direct, and not through scheming jobbers. Should suspect P. to have a personal interest in the matter but for the fact that the President, the Blairs, and one or two men of integrity and character favor it.

September 12, *Friday*. A clever rain last night, which I hope may swell the tributaries of the upper Potomac.

A call from Wilkes, who is disturbed because I press him so earnestly. Told him I wished him off as soon as possible; had hoped he would have left before this; Rebel cruisers

are about and immense injury might result from a single day's delay. I find the officers generally dislike to sail with him.

A brief meeting of the Cabinet. Seward was not present. Has met with us but once in several weeks. No cause assigned for this constant absence, yet a reluctance to discuss and bring to a decision any great question without him is apparent.

In a long and free discussion on the condition of the army and military affairs by the President, Blair, Smith, and myself, the President repeated what he had before said to me, that the selection of McClellan to command active operations was not made by him but by Halleck, and remarked that the latter was driven to it by necessity. He had arranged his army corps and designated the generals to lead each column, and called on Burnside to take chief command. But Burnside declined and declared himself unequal to the position. Halleck had no other officer whom he thought capable and said he consequently was left with no alternative but McClellan.

"The officers and soldiers," the President said, "were pleased with the reinstatement of that officer, but I wish you to understand it was not made by me. I put McClellan in command here to defend the city, for he has great powers of organization and discipline; he comprehends and can arrange military combinations better than any of our generals, and there his usefulness ends. He can't go ahead — he can't strike a blow. He got to Rockville, for instance, last Sunday night, and in four days he advanced to Middlebrook, ten miles, in pursuit of an invading enemy. This was rapid movement for him. When he went up the Peninsula there was no reason why he should have been detained a single day at Yorktown, but he waited, and gave the enemy time to gather his forces and strengthen his position."

I suggested that this dilatory, defensive policy was partly at least the result of education; that a defensive

policy was the West Point policy. Our Government was not intended to be aggressive but to resist aggression or invasion, — to repel, not to advance. We had good engineers and accomplished officers, but that no efficient, energetic, audacious, fighting commanding general had yet appeared from that institution. We were all aware that General Scott had, at the very commencement, begun with this error of defense, the Anaconda theory; was unwilling to invade the seceding States, said we must shut off the world from the Rebels by blockade and by our defenses. He had always been reluctant to enter Virginia or strike a blow. Blair said this was so, that we had men of narrow, aristocratic notions from West Point, but as yet no generals to command; that there were many clever second-rate men, but no superior mind of the higher class. The difficulty, however, was in the War Department itself. There was bluster but not competency. It should make generals, should search and find them, and bring them up, for there were such somewhere, — far down perhaps. The War Department should give character and tone to the army and all military movements. Such, said he, is the fact with the Navy Department, which makes no bluster, has no blowers, but quietly and intelligently does its work, inspires its officers and men, and brings forward leaders like Farragut, Foote, and Du Pont. The result tells you the value of system, of rightful discrimination, good sense, judgment, knowledge, and study of men. They make ten times the noise at the War Department, but see what they do or fail to do. The Secretary of War should advise with the best and most experienced minds, avail himself of their opinions, not give way to narrow prejudices and strive to weaken his generals, or impair confidence in them on account of personal dislikes. We have officers of capacity, depend upon it, and they should be hunted out and brought forward. The Secretary should dig up these jewels. That is his duty. B. named Sherman and one or two others who showed capacity.

"McClellan," said B., "is not the man, but he is the best among the major-generals." Smith said he should prefer Banks. Blair said Banks was no general, had no capacity for chief command. Was probably an estimable officer in his proper place, under orders. So was Burnside, and Heintzelman, and Sykes, but the War Department must hunt up greater men, better military minds, than these to carry on successful war.

Smith complimented Pope's patriotism and bravery, and the President joined in the encomiums. Said that Halleck declared that Pope had made but one mistake in all the orders he had given, and that was in ordering one column to retreat on Tuesday from Centreville to Chain Bridge, whereby he exposed his flank, but no harm came of his error. Blair was unwilling to concede any credit whatever to Pope; said he was a blower and a liar and ought never to have been intrusted with such a command as that in front. The President admitted Pope's infirmity, but said a liar might be brave and have skill as an officer. He said Pope had great cunning. He had published his report, for instance, which was wrong, — an offense for which, if it can be traced to him, Pope must be made amenable, — "But," said he, "it can never, by any skill, be traced to him." "That is the man," said Blair. "Old John Pope,[1] his father, was a flatterer, a deceiver, a liar, and a trickster; all the Popes are so."

When we left the Executive Mansion, Blair, who came out with me, remarked that he was glad this conversation had taken place. He wanted to let the President know we must have a Secretary of War who can do something besides intrigue, — who can give force and character to the army, administer the Department on correct principles. Cameron, he said, had got into the War Department by the contrivance and cunning of Seward, who used him and other corruptionists as he pleased, with the assistance of

[1] General Pope's father was Judge Nathaniel Pope, of the United States District Court for Illinois.

Thurlow Weed; that Seward had tried to get Cameron into the Treasury, but was unable to quite accomplish that, and after a hard underground quarrel against Chase, it ended in the loss of Cameron, who went over to Chase and left Seward. Bedeviled with the belief he might be a candidate for the Presidency, Cameron was beguiled and led to mount the nigger hobby, alarmed the President with his notions, and at the right moment, B. says, he plainly and frankly told the President he ought to get rid of C. at once, that he was not fit to remain in the Cabinet, and was incompetent to manage the War Department, which he had undertaken to run by the aid of Tom A. Scott, a corrupt lobby-jobber from Philadelphia. Seward was ready to get rid of Cameron after he went over to Chase, but instead of bringing in an earnest, vigorous, sincere man like old Ben Wade to fill the place, he picked up this black terrier, who is no better than Cameron, though he has a better assistant than Scott, in Watson. Blair says he now wants assistance to "get this black terrier out of his kennel." I probably did not respond as he wished, for I am going into no combination or movement against colleagues. He said he must go and see Seward. In his dislike of Stanton, Blair is sincere and earnest, but in his detestation he may fail to allow Stanton qualities that he really possesses. Stanton is no favorite of mine. He has energy and application, is industrious and driving, but devises nothing, shuns responsibility, and I doubt his sincerity always. He wants no general to overtop him, is jealous of others in any position who have influence and popular regard; but he has cunning and skill, dissembles his feelings, in short, is a hypocrite, a moral coward, while affecting to be, and to a certain extent being, brusque, overvaliant in words. Blair says he is dishonest, that he has taken bribes, and that he is a double-dealer; that he is now deceiving both Seward and Chase; that Seward brought him into the Cabinet after Chase stole Cameron, and that Chase is now stealing Stanton. Reminds me that he exposed Stanton's corrupt character,

and stated an instance which had come to his knowledge and where he has proof of a bribe having been received; that he made this exposure when Stanton was a candidate for Attorney for the District. Yet Seward, knowing these facts, had induced and persuaded the President to bring this corrupt man into the War Department. The country was now suffering for this mistaken act. Seward wanted a creature of his own in the War Department, that he might use, but Stanton was actually using Seward.

Stanton's appointment to the War Department was in some respects a strange one. I was never a favorite of Seward, who always wanted personal friends. I was not of his sort, personally or politically. Stanton, knowing his creator, sympathized with him. For several months after his appointment, he exhibited some of his peculiar traits towards me. He is by nature a sensationalist, has from the first been filled with panics and alarms, in which I have not participated; and I have sometimes exhibited little respect or regard for his mercurial flights and sensational disturbances. He saw on more than one occasion that I was cool when he was excited, and he well knew that I neither admired his policy nor indorsed his views. Of course we were courteously civil, but reserved and distant. The opposition in the early days of the Administration were violent against the Navy management, and the class of Republicans who had secretly been opposed to my appointment joined in the clamor. In the progress of events there was a change. The Navy and my course, which had been assailed, — and which assaults he countenanced, — grew in favor, while my mercurial colleague failed to give satisfaction. His deportment changed after the naval success at New Orleans, and we have since moved along harmoniously at least. He is impulsive, not administrative; has quickness, often rashness, when he has nothing to apprehend; is more violent than vigorous, more demonstrative than discriminating, more vain than wise; is rude, arrogant, and domineering towards those in subordinate positions if

they will submit to his rudeness, but is a sycophant and dissembler in deportment and language with those whom he fears. He has equal cunning but more force and greater capacity than Cameron; yet the qualities I have mentioned and his uneasy, restless nature make him, though possessed of a considerable ability of a certain sort, an unfit man in many respects for the War Department in times like these. I have sometimes thought McClellan would better discharge the duties of Secretary of War than those of a general in the field, and that a similar impression may have crossed Stanton's mind, and caused or increased his hate of that officer. There is no love lost between them, and their enmity towards each other does not injure McClellan in the estimation of Blair. Should McClellan in this Maryland campaign display vigor and beat the Rebels, he may overthrow Stanton as well as Lee. Blair will give him active assistance. But he must rid himself of what President Lincoln calls the "slows." This, I fear, is impossible; it is his nature.

September 13. The country is very desponding and much disheartened. There is a perceptibly growing distrust of the Administration and of its ability and power to conduct the war. Military doubts were whispered on the Peninsula by McClellan's favorites before his recall, and when he was reinstated public confidence in the Administration throughout the country was impaired. Citizens and military, though from different causes, were distrustful. It is evident, however, that the reinstatement of McC. has inspired strength, vigor, and hope in the army. Officers and soldiers appear to be united in his favor and willing to follow his lead. It has now been almost a week since he left Washington, yet he has not overtaken the enemy, who are not distant. There is doubt whether he is thirty miles from Washington. Perhaps he ought not to be, until he has gathered up and massed the dispersed elements of his command. I shall not criticize in ignorance, but insist it is the

duty of all to sustain him. I am not without hopes that his late experience and the strong pressure of public opinion will overcome his hesitancy and rouse him to thorough work. He is never rash. I fear he is not a fighting general. Stanton is cross and grouty. A victory for McClellan will bring no joy to him, though it would gladden the whole country.

Rev. Dr. Patton of Chicago, chairman of a committee appointed in northern Illinois, desired an introduction with his associates to the President, to advise with him on the subject of slavery and emancipation. The President assented cheerfully.

September 15. Some rumors yesterday and more direct information to-day are cheering to the Union cause. McClellan telegraphs a victory, defeat of the enemy with loss of 15,000 men, and that "General Lee admits they are badly whipped." To whom Lee made this admission so that it should be brought straight to McC. and telegraphed here does not appear. A tale like this from Pope would have been classed as one of his fictions. It may be all true, coming from McClellan, but I do not credit Lee's confession or admission. That we have had a fight and beaten the Rebels, I can believe. It scarcely could have been otherwise. I am afraid it is not as decisive as it should be, and as is the current belief, but shall rejoice if McC. has actually overtaken the Rebels, which is not yet altogether clear.

September 16. Chase called on me this morning. Wishes a secret concerted attack on Richmond. Says Stanton will furnish 10,000 men. Told him we would do all that could be expected of the Navy in a sudden movement, but doubted if a military expedition could be improvised as speedily and decisively as he supposed. He thought it could certainly be effected in six days. I told him to try. We would have a naval force ready in that time, though

not so large and powerful as I would wish; but we would do our part.

Chase tells me that Harrington, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, was at Fortress Monroe last Thursday and heard Bankhead, who commands the Minnesota, say that the Government was a poor affair, that the Administration was inefficient, that it is time the politicians were cleared out of Washington and the army in power. Harrington called subsequently and confirmed the statement, — less strong perhaps in words but about as offensive. I requested him to reduce his statement to writing.

At the Executive Mansion, the Secretary of State informed us there was to be no Cabinet-meeting. He was authorized by the President to communicate the fact. Smith said it would be as well, perhaps, to postpone the Cabinet-meetings altogether and indefinitely, — there seemed no use latterly for our coming together. Others expressed corresponding opinions. Seward turned off, a little annoyed.

An unfavorable impression is getting abroad in regard to the President and the Administration, not without reason, perhaps, which prompted Smith and others to express their minds freely. There is really very little of a government here at this time, so far as most of the Cabinet are concerned; certainly but little consultation in this important period. Seward, when in Washington, spends more or less of each day with the President, absorbs his attention, and I fear to an extent influences his action not always wisely. The President has good sense, intelligence, and an excellent heart, but is sadly perplexed and distressed by events. He, to an extent, distrusts his own administrative ability and experience. Seward, instead of strengthening and fortifying him, encourages this self-distrust, but is not backward in giving his own judgment and experience, which are often defective expedients, to guide the Executive. A conviction of this state of things stirred up Smith to make his remarks. The President has, I believe, sincere

respect and regard for each and every member of the Cabinet, but Seward seeks, and has at times, influence, which is sometimes harmful. The President would often do better without him, were he to follow his own instincts, or were he to consult all his advisers in council. He would find his own opinions confirmed and be convinced that Seward's suggestions are frequently unwise and weak and temporizing. No one attempts to obtrude himself, or warn the President, or even to suggest to him that others than S. should be consulted on some of the important measures of the Government. In fact, they are not informed of some of the measures which are of general interest until they see them in operation, or hear of them from others. Chase is much chafed by these things, and endeavors, and to some extent succeeds, in also getting beside the President, and obtaining information of what is going forward. But this only excites and stimulates Seward, who has the inside track and means to keep it. The President is unsuspicious, or apparently so; readily gives his ear to suggestions from any one. Only one of his Cabinet, however, has manifested a disposition to monopolize his attention; but the discussion of important measures is sometimes checked almost as soon as introduced, and, without any consultation, or without being again brought forward, they are disposed of, the Secretary of State alone having had sometimes certainly a view, or ear, or eye in the matter. He alone has abbreviated general consultation in many cases. With greater leisure than most of the Cabinet officers, unless it be Smith of the Interior, he runs to the President two or three times a day, gets his ear, gives him his tongue, makes himself interesting by anecdotes, and artfully contrives with Stanton's aid to dispose of measures without action or give them direction independent of his associates. Under the circumstances, I perhaps am, latterly, as little interfered with as any one, though the duties of the State and Navy Departments run together; yet I am sometimes excessively annoyed and embarrassed by meddlesome

intrusions and inconsiderate and unauthorized action by the Secretary of State. The Navy Department has, necessarily, greater intimacy, or connection, with the State Department than any other, for, besides international questions growing out of the blockade, our squadrons and commanders abroad come in contact with our ministers, consuls, and commercial agents, and each has intercourse with the Governments and representatives of other nations. Mutual understanding and coöperation are therefore essential and indispensable. But while I never attempt to direct the agents of the State Department, or think of it, or to meddle with affairs in the appropriate sphere of the Secretary of State, an entirely different course is pursued by him as regards the Navy and naval operations. He is anxious to direct, to be the Premier, the real Executive, and give away national rights as a favor. Since our first conflict, however, when he secretly interfered with the Sumter expedition and got up an enterprise to Pensacola, we have had no similar encounter; yet there has been an itching propensity on his part to have a controlling voice in naval matters with which he has no business, — which he really does not understand, — and he sometimes improperly interferes as in the disposition of mails on captured vessels. The Attorney-General has experienced similar improper interference, more than any other perhaps; none are exempt. But the Secretary of State, while meddlesome with others, is not at all communicative of the affairs of his own Department. Scarcely any important measures or even appointments of that Department are brought before us, except by the President himself or by his express direction. The consequence is that there is reticence by others and the Government is administered in a great measure by Departments. Seward is inquisitive and learns early what is doing by each of his associates, frequently before we meet in council, while the other Cabinet officers limit themselves to their provided duties and are sometimes wholly unadvised of his.

I have administered the Navy Department almost entirely independent of Cabinet consultation, and I may say almost without direction of the President, who not only gives me his confidence but intrusts all naval matters to me. This has not been my wish. Though glad to have his confidence, I should prefer that every important naval movement should pass a Cabinet review. To-day, for instance, Wilkes was given the appointment of Acting Rear-Admiral, and I have sent him off with a squadron to cruise in the West Indies. All this has been done without Cabinet consultation, or advice with any one, except Seward and the President. The detail and the reserve are at the instigation of Seward, who wished Wilkes, between whom and himself, since the Trent affair, there seems to be an understanding, to have a command, without specifying where. In due time our associates in the Cabinet will learn the main facts and infer that I withheld from them my orders. My instructions to our naval officers, — commanders of squadrons or single ships, — cruising on our blockade duty, have never been submitted to the Cabinet, though I have communicated them freely to each. I have never read but one of my letters of instructions to the President, and that was to Captain Mercer of the Powhatan in command of the naval expedition to Sumter a few weeks after I entered upon my duties, and those instructions were, covertly, set aside and defeated by Seward.

So in regard to each and all the Departments; if I have known of their regulations and instructions, much of it has not been in Cabinet consultations. Seward beyond any and all others is responsible for this state of things. It has given him individual power, but often at the expense of good administration.

In everything relating to military operations by land, General Scott first, then McClellan, then Halleck, have directed and controlled. The Government was virtually in the hands of the General-in-Chief, so far as armies and military operations were concerned. The Administration

had no distinct military policy, was permitted to have none. The President was generally advised and consulted, but Seward was the special confidant of General Scott, was more than any one of McClellan, and, in conjunction with Stanton, of Halleck. With wonderful kindness of heart and deference to others, the President, with little self-esteem and unaffected modesty, has permitted this and in a great measure has surrendered to military officers prerogatives intrusted to himself. The mental qualities of Seward are almost the precise opposite of the President. He is obtrusive and never reserved or diffident of his own powers, is assuming and presuming, meddlesome, and uncertain, ready to exercise authority always, never doubting his right until challenged; then he becomes timid, uncertain, distrustful, and inventive of schemes to extricate himself, or to change his position. He is not particularly scrupulous in accomplishing an end, nor so mindful of what is due to others as would be expected of one who aims to be always courteous towards equals. The President he treats with a familiarity that sometimes borders on disrespect. The President, though he observes this ostentatious presumption, never receives it otherwise than pleasantly, but treats it as a weakness in one to whom he attributes qualities essential to statesmanship, whose pliability is pleasant, and whose ready shrewdness he finds convenient and acceptable.

With temperaments so constituted and so unlike it is not surprising that the obsequious affability and ready assumption of the subordinate presumed on and to an extent influenced the really superior intellect of the principal, and made himself in a degree the centralizing personage. While the President conceded to the Secretary of State almost all that he assumed, not one of his colleagues made that concession. They treated his opinions respectfully, but as no better than the opinions of others, except as they had merit; and his errors they exposed and opposed as they deserved. One or two have always been ready to

avail themselves of the opportunity. In the early days of the Administration the Cabinet officers were absorbed by labors and efforts to make themselves familiar with their duties, so as rightly to discharge them. Those duties were more onerous and trying, in consequence of the overthrow of old parties and the advent of new men and new organizations, with the great rupture that was going on in the Government, avowedly to destroy it, than had ever been experienced by any of their predecessors.

Whilst the other members of the Cabinet were absorbed in familiarizing themselves with their duties and in preparing for impending disaster, the Secretary of State, less apprehensive of disaster, spent a considerable portion of every day with the President, patronizing and instructing him, hearing and telling anecdotes, relating interesting details of occurrences in the Senate, and inculcating his political party notions. I think he has no very profound or sincere convictions. Cabinet-meetings, which should, at that exciting and interesting period, have been daily, were infrequent, irregular, and without system. The Secretary of State notified his associates when the President desired a meeting of the heads of Departments. It seemed unadvisable to the Premier — as he liked to be called and considered — that the members should meet often, and they did not. Consequently there was very little concerted action.

At the earlier meetings there was little or no formality; the Cabinet-meetings were a sort of privy council or gathering of equals, much like a Senatorial caucus, where there was no recognized leader and the Secretary of State put himself in advance of the President. No seats were assigned or regularly taken. The Secretary of State was invariably present some little time before the Cabinet assembled and from his former position as the chief executive of the largest State in the Union, as well as from his recent place as a Senator, and from his admitted experience and familiarity with affairs, assumed, and was allowed, as was

proper, to take the lead in consultations and also to give tone and direction to the manner and mode of proceedings. The President, if he did not actually wish, readily acquiesced in, this. Mr. Lincoln, having never had experience in administering the Government, State or National, deferred to the suggestions and course of those who had. Mr. Seward was not slow in taking upon himself to prescribe action and doing most of the talking, without much regard to the modest chief, but often to the disgust of his associates, particularly Mr. Bates, who was himself always courteous and respectful, and to the annoyance of Mr. Chase, who had, like Mr. Seward, experience as a chief magistrate. Discussions were desultory and without order or system, but in the summing-up and conclusions the President, who was a patient listener and learner, concentrated results, and often determined questions adverse to the Secretary of State, regarding him and his opinions, as he did those of his other advisers, for what they were worth and generally no more. But the want of system and free communication among all as equals prevented that concert and comity which is really strength to an administration.

Each head of a Department took up and managed the affairs which devolved upon him as he best could, frequently without consulting his associates, and as a consequence without much knowledge of the transactions of other Departments, but as each consulted with the President, the Premier, from daily, almost hourly, intercourse with him, continued, if not present at these interviews, to ascertain the doings of each and all, though himself imparting but little of his own course to any. Great events of a general character began to impel the members to assemble daily, and sometimes General Scott was present, and occasionally Commodore Stringham; at times others were called in. The conduct of affairs during this period was awkward and embarrassing. After a few weeks the members, without preconcert, expressed a wish to be

better advised on subjects for which they were all measurably responsible to the country. The Attorney-General expressed his dissatisfaction with these informal proceedings and advised meetings on stated days for general and current affairs, and hoped, when there was occasion, special calls would be made. The Secretary of State alone dissented, hesitated, doubted, objected, thought it inexpedient, said all had so much to do that we could not spare the time; but the President was pleased with the suggestion, if he did not prompt it, and concurred with the rest of the Cabinet.

The form of proceeding was discussed; Mr. Seward thought that would take care of itself. Some suggestions were made in regard to important appointments which had been made by each head of Department, the Secretary of State taking the lead in selecting high officials without general consultation. There seemed an understanding between the Secretaries of State and Treasury, who had charge of the most important appointments, of which understanding the President was perhaps cognizant. Chase had extensive patronage, Seward appointments of high character. The two arranged that each should make his own selection of subordinates. These two men had political aspirations which did not extend to their associates (with perhaps a single exception that troubled neither). Chase thought he was fortifying himself by this arrangement, but he often was overreached, and the arrangement was one of the mistakes of his life.

Without going farther into details, the effect, and probably the intention, of these proceedings in those early days was to dwarf the President and elevate the Secretary of State. The latter also circumscribed the sphere of [the former] so far as he could. Many of the important measures, particularly of his own Department, he managed to dispose of, or contrived to have determined, independent of the Cabinet.

My early collision with him in some complications con-

nected with the Sumter and Pensacola expeditions, when he was so flagrantly wrong as to be overruled by the President, caused us to get along thenceforward without serious difficulties, though, our duties being intimate, we were often brought together and had occasional disagreements.

Between Seward and Chase there was perpetual rivalry and mutual but courtly distrust. Each was ambitious. Both had capacity. Seward was supple and dexterous; Chase was clumsy and strong. Seward made constant mistakes, but recovered with a facility that was wonderful and almost always without injury to himself; Chase committed fewer blunders, but persevered in them when made, often to his own serious detriment. In the fevered condition of public opinion, the aims and policies of the [two] were strongly developed. Seward, who had sustained McClellan and came to possess, more than any one else in the Cabinet, his confidence, finally yielded to Stanton's vehement demands and acquiesced in his sacrifice. Chase, from an original friend and self-constituted patron of McC., became disgusted, alienated, an implacable enemy, denouncing McClellan as a coward and military imbecile. In all this he was stimulated by Stanton, and the victim of Seward, who first supplanted him with McC. and then gave up McC. to appease Stanton and public opinion.

September 18, *Thursday*. The last two or three days have been pregnant with rumors and speculations of an exciting character. Some officials on the watch-towers, sentinels and generals, have been alarmed; but on the whole the people have manifested a fair degree of confidence and composure.

We have authentic news that a long and sanguinary battle has been fought.[1] McClellan telegraphs that the fight between the two armies was for fourteen hours. The Rebels must have been in strong position to have maintained such a fight against our large army. He also tele-

[1] The Battle of Antietam was fought on the 16th and 17th.

graphs that our loss is heavy, particularly in generals, but gives neither names nor results. His dispatches are seldom full, clear, or satisfactory. "Behaved splendidly," "performed handsomely," but wherein or what was accomplished is never told. Our anxiety is intense.

We have but few and foggy dispatches of any kind these troublesome days. Yesterday and day before there were conflicting accounts about Harper's Ferry, which, it is now admitted, was thrown to the Rebels with scarcely a struggle. Miles,[1] who was in command, is reported mortally wounded. . . .

General Mansfield is reported slain. He was from my State and almost a neighbor. He called on me last week, on his way from Norfolk to join the army above. When parting he once shook hands, there then was a farther brief conversation and he came back from the door after he left and again shook hands. "Farewell," said I, "success attend you." He remarked, with emphasis, and some feeling, "We may never meet again."

September 19, *Friday*. Am vexed and disturbed by tidings from the squadron off Mobile. Preble, by sheer pusillanimous neglect, feebleness, and indecision, let the pirate steamer Oreto run the blockade. She came right up and passed him, flying English colors. Instead of checking her advance or sinking her, he fired all round, made a noise, and is said to have hurt none of her English crew. This case must be investigated and an example made. Had —— been dismissed, this would not have occurred.

Nothing from the army, except that, instead of following up the victory, attacking and capturing the Rebels, they, after a day's armistice, are rapidly escaping over the river. McClellan says they are crossing and that Pleasanton is after them. Oh dear!

I am not writing a history of the War or its events herein. That will be found in the books. But I record my own

[1] Colonel Dixon S. Miles. He died of his wounds, Sept. 16, 1862.

impressions and the random speculations, views, and opinions of others also.

September 20, *Saturday*. Am troubled by Preble's conduct. There must be a stop put to the timid, hesitating, and I fear sometimes traitorous course of some of our officers. Tenderness, remonstrance, reproof do no good. Preble is not a traitor, but loyal. An educated, gentlemanly officer of a distinguished family and more than ordinary acquirements, but wants promptitude, energy, decision, audacity, perhaps courage. I am inclined to believe, however, an excess of reading, and a fear that he might violate etiquette, some point of international law, or that he should give offense to Great Britain, whose insolence the State Department fears and deprecates and submits to with all humility, had its influence. He paused at a critical moment to reflect on what he had read and the state of affairs. A man less versed in books would have sunk the pirate if she did not stop when challenged, regardless of her colors. No Englishman had a right to approach and pass the sentinel on duty. Preble was placed there to prevent intercourse, — was a sentinel to watch the Rebels and all others, — and no Englishman had a right to trespass. A board of officers would be likely to excuse him, as in the case of —— and ——,[1] on account of his amiable qualities, general intelligence, and good intentions. The time has arrived when these derelictions must not go unpunished. I should have preferred that some other man should have been punished. I have had the subject under consideration with some of the best minds I could consult, and found no difference of opinion. I then took the dispatches to the President and submitted them to him. He said promptly: "Dismiss him. If that is your opinion, it is mine. I will do it." Secretary Seward and Attorney-General Bates, each of whom I casually met, advised dismissal. It is painful, but an unavoidable duty. I am sorry

[1] No names in original.

for Preble, but shall be sorry for my country if it is not done. Its effect upon the Navy will be more salutary than were he and fifty like him to fall in battle.

Commander Joe Smith,[1] who died at his post when the ill-fated Congress went down from the assault of the Merrimac, perished in the line of duty. I have never been satisfied with the conduct of the flag-officer[2] in those days, who was absent in the waters of North Carolina, — purposely and unnecessarily absent, in my apprehension, through fear of the Merrimac, which he knew was completed, and ready to come out. It was like dread of the new Merrimac at Richmond, which was nearly ready, that led him finally to resign his squadron command. He has wordy pretensions, some capacity, but no hard courage. There is a clan of such men in the Navy, varying in shade and degree, who in long years of peace have been students and acquired position, but whose real traits are not generally understood. The Department is compelled to give them commands, and at the same time is held responsible for their weakness, errors, and want of fighting qualities.

Nothing conclusive from the army. The Rebels have crossed the river without being hurt or seriously molested, — much in character with the general army management of the war. Little is said on the subject. Stanton makes an occasional sneering remark, Chase now and then a better one, but there is no general review, inquiry, or discussion. There is no abatement of hostility to McClellan.

September 22. A special Cabinet-meeting. The subject was the Proclamation for emancipating the slaves after a certain date, in States that shall then be in rebellion. For several weeks the subject has been suspended, but the President says never lost sight of. When it was submitted, and now in taking up the Proclamation, the President stated that the question was finally decided, the act and

[1] Lieutenant Joseph B. Smith.

[2] Captain, afterwards Rear-Admiral, Louis M. Goldsborough.

STANTON CHASE THE PRESIDENT WELLES SMITH SEWARD BLAIR BATES

PRESIDENT LINCOLN AND CABINET AT THE SIGNING OF THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

From the painting by Francis Bicknell Carpenter

the consequences were his, but that he felt it due to us to make us acquainted with the fact and to invite criticism on the paper which he had prepared. There were, he had found, not unexpectedly, some differences in the Cabinet, but he had, after ascertaining in his own way the views of each and all, individually and collectively, formed his own conclusions and made his own decisions. In the course of the discussion on this paper, which was long, earnest, and, on the general principle involved, harmonious, he remarked that he had made a vow, a covenant, that if God gave us the victory in the approaching battle, he would consider it an indication of Divine will, and that it was his duty to move forward in the cause of emancipation. It might be thought strange, he said, that he had in this way submitted the disposal of matters when the way was not clear to his mind what he should do. God had decided this question in favor of the slaves. He was satisfied it was right, was confirmed and strengthened in his action by the vow and the results. His mind was fixed, his decision made, but he wished his paper announcing his course as correct in terms as it could be made without any change in his determination. He read the document. One or two unimportant amendments suggested by Seward were approved. It was then handed to the Secretary of State to publish to-morrow. After this, Blair remarked that he considered it proper to say he did not concur in the expediency of the measure at this time, though he approved of the principle, and should therefore wish to file his objections. He stated at some length his views, which were substantially that we ought not to put in greater jeopardy the patriotic element in the Border States, that the results of this Proclamation would be to carry over those States *en masse* to the Secessionists as soon as it was read, and that there was also a class of partisans in the Free States endeavoring to revive old parties, who would have a club put into their hands of which they would avail themselves to beat the Administration.

The President said he had considered the danger to be apprehended from the first objection, which was undoubtedly serious, but the objection was certainly as great not to act; as regarded the last, it had not much weight with him.

The question of power, authority, in the Government to set free the slaves was not much discussed at this meeting, but had been canvassed by the President in private conversation with the members individually. Some thought legislation advisable before the step was taken, but Congress was clothed with no authority on this subject, nor is the Executive, except under the war power, — military necessity, martial law, when there can be no legislation. This was the view which I took when the President first presented the subject to Seward and myself last summer as we were returning from the funeral of Stanton's child, — a ride of two or three miles from beyond Georgetown. Seward was at that time not at all communicative, and, I think, not willing to advise, though he did not dissent from, the movement. It is momentous both in its immediate and remote results, and an exercise of extraordinary power which cannot be justified on mere humanitarian principles, and would never have been attempted but to preserve the national existence. The slaves must be with us or against us in the War. Let us have them. These were my convictions and this the drift of the discussion.

The effect which the Proclamation will have on the public mind is a matter of some uncertainty. In some respects it would, I think, have been better to have issued it when formerly first considered.

There is an impression that Seward has opposed, and is opposed to, the measure. I have not been without that impression myself, chiefly from his hesitation to commit himself, and perhaps because action was suspended on his suggestion. But in the final discussion he has as cordially supported the measure as Chase.

For myself the subject has, from its magnitude and its

consequences, oppressed me, aside from the ethical features of the question. It is a step in the progress of this war which will extend into the distant future. A favorable termination of this terrible conflict seems more remote with every movement, and unless the Rebels hasten to avail themselves of the alternative presented, of which I see little probability, the war can scarcely be other than one of emancipation to the slave, or subjugation, or submission to their Rebel owners. There is in the Free States a very general impression that this measure will insure a speedy peace. I cannot say that I so view it. No one in those States dare advocate peace as a means of prolonging slavery, even if it is his honest opinion, and the pecuniary, industrial, and social sacrifice impending will intensify the struggle before us. While, however, these dark clouds are above and around us, I cannot see how the subject can be avoided. Perhaps it is not desirable it should be. It is, however, an arbitrary and despotic measure in the cause of freedom.

September 23, *Tuesday*. Received a letter from Commodore W. D. Porter stating his arrival in New York after many signal exploits, — capturing the ironclad steamer Arkansas, running Bayou Sara, etc. Charges from Admirals Farragut and Davis, accusing him of misrepresentation and worse, have preceded his arrival. The War Department has sent me an inexcusable letter, abusive of the military, which Porter has written, and which Stanton cannot notice. I have been compelled to reprove him and to send him before the Retiring Board. Like all the Porters, he is a courageous, daring, troublesome, reckless officer.

No news from the army. The Rebels appear to be moving back into Virginia in their own time and way, to select their own resting-place, and to do, in short, pretty much as they please. Am sad, sick, sorrowful over this state of things, but see no remedy without change of officers.

September 24, *Wednesday*. Secretary Smith called this morning. Said he had just had an interview with Judge-Advocate Turner, who related a conversation which had taken place between himself (T.) and Colonel Key, one of Halleck's staff. T. had expressed to K. his surprise that McClellan had not followed up the victory last week by pursuing the Rebels and capturing them or cutting them in pieces. That, said K., is not the policy. Turner asked what, then, was the policy. Key said it was one of exhaustion; that it would have been impolitic and injudicious to have destroyed the Rebel army, for that would have ended the contest without any compromise, and it was the army policy at the right time to compel the opposing forces to adopt a compromise.[1]

Smith assures me that Turner made to him this communication. It is most extraordinary, yet entirely consistent with current events and what Wilson and others have stated. While I can hardly give credit to the statement, the facts can be reconciled with every action or inaction, — with wasted energies, fruitless campaigns, and barren fights. Smith fully believes it.

Had an impertinent letter from Senator John P. Hale, who asks for copies of different opinions given me by the Attorney-General on the subject of appointing midshipmen, and cautioning me not to disregard the plain language of the law, whatever might be the opinion of the Attorney-General. Informed Senator Hale that I had the unofficial advice instead of the official opinion of the law officer of the Government, given as a patriot and statesman, recommending that the appointments should be made, whatever might be the preliminary forms rendered impossible by the anomalous condition of the country; that every person whom I had consulted — and I had consulted many — concurred in giving similar advice; that it accorded

[1] Major John J. Key was summarily called upon by the President to account for his language, stingingly rebuked, and forthwith discharged from the service.

with my own views, etc., etc.; that I had made the appointments before receiving his letter indicating, on his part, an opposite policy.

That he will assail these appointments I have little doubt, his object being in this instance to attack the Attorney-General, whom he cannot use, rather than myself, though willing to assail both provided he can do so successfully. With some humor but little industry, some qualities as a jester and but few as a statesman, I have not much respect for this Senatorial buffoon, who has neither application nor fidelity, who is neither honest nor sincere. Such men are not useful legislators.

As I write, 9 P.M., a band of music strikes up on the opposite side of the square, a complimentary serenade to the President for the Emancipation Proclamation. The document has been in the main well received, but there is some violent opposition, and the friends of the measure have made this demonstration to show their approval.

September 25, *Thursday.* Had some talk to-day with Chase on financial matters. Our drafts on Barings now cost us 29 per cent. I object to this as presenting an untrue statement of naval expenditures, — unjust to the Navy Department as well as incorrect in fact. If I draw for $100,000 it ought not to take from the naval appropriation $129,000. No estimates, no appropriations by Congress, embrace the $29,000 brought on by the mistaken Treasury policy of depreciating the currency. I therefore desire the Secretary of the Treasury to place $100,000 in the hands of the Barings to the credit of the Navy Department, less the exchange. This he declines to do, but insists on deducting the difference between money and inconvertible paper, which I claim to be wrong, because in our foreign expenditures the paper which his financial policy forces upon us at home is worthless abroad. The depreciation is the result of a mistaken financial policy, and illustrates its error and tendency to error.

The departure from a specie standard and the adoption of an irredeemable paper currency deranges the finances and is fraught with disastrous consequences. This vitiation of the currency is the beginning of evil, — a fatal mistake, which will be likely to overwhelm Chase and the Administration, if he and they remain here long enough.

Had some conversation with Chase relating to the War. He is much discouraged, thinks the President is, believes the President is disposed to let matters take their course, deplores this state of things but can see no relief. I asked if the principal source of the difficulty was not in the fact that we actually had not a War Department. Stanton is dissatisfied, and he and those under his influence do not sustain and encourage McClellan, yet he needs to be constantly stimulated, inspired, and pushed forward. It was, I said, apparent to me, and I thought to him, that the Secretary of War, though arrogant and often offensive in language, did not direct army movements; he appears to have something else than army operations in view. The army officers here, or others than he, appear to control military movements. Chase was disturbed by my remarks. Said Stanton had not been sustained, and his Department had become demoralized, but he (C.) should never consent to remain if Stanton left. I told him he misapprehended me. I was not the man to propose the exclusion of Stanton, or any one of our Cabinet associates, but we must look at things as they are and not fear to discuss them. It was our duty to meet difficulties and try to correct them. It was wrong for him, or any one, to say he would not remain and do his duty if the welfare of the country required a change of policy or a personal change in any one Department. If Stanton was militarily unfit, indifferent, dissatisfied, or engaged in petty personal intrigues against a man whom he disliked, to the neglect of the duties with which he was intrusted, or had not the necessary administrative ability, was from rudeness or any other cause offensive, we ought not to shut our eyes to the fact. If a man

were to be brought into the War Department, or proposed to be brought in, with heart and mind in the cause, sincere, earnest, and capable, who would master the generals and control them, break up cliquism, and bring forward those officers who had the highest military qualities, we ought not to object to it. I knew not that such a change was thought of. Without controverting or assenting, he said Stanton had given way just as Cameron did, and in that way lost command and influence. It is evident that Chase takes pretty much the same views that I do, but has not made up his mind to act upon his convictions. He feels that he has been influenced by Stanton, whose political and official support he wants in his aspirations, but begins to have a suspicion that S. is unreliable. They have consulted and acted in concert and C. had flattered himself that he had secured S. in his interest, but must have become aware that there is a stronger tie between Seward and Stanton than any cord of his. C. is not always an acute and accurate reader of men, but he cannot have failed to detect some of the infirm traits of Stanton. When I declined to make myself a party to the combination against McClellan and refused to sign the paper which Chase brought me, Stanton, with whom I was not very intimate, spoke to me in regard to it. I told Stanton I thought the course proposed was disrespectful to the President. Stanton said he felt under no obligation to Mr. Lincoln, that the obligations were the other way, both to him and to me. His remarks made an impression on me most unfavorable, and confirmed my previous opinion that he is not faithful and true but insincere.

The real character of J. P. Hale is exhibited in a single transaction. He wrote me an impertinent and dictatorial letter which I received on Wednesday morning, admonishing me not to violate law in the appointment of midshipmen. Learning from my answer that I was making these appointments notwithstanding his warning and protest, he had the superlative meanness to call on Assistant Secretary

Fox, and request him, if I was actually making the appointments which he declares to be illegal, to procure on his (Hale's) application the appointment of a lad for whom he felt an interest. This is after his supercilious letter to me, and one equally supercilious to Fox, which the latter showed me, in which he buttoned up his virtue to the throat and said he would never acquiesce in such a violation of the law. Oh, John P. Hale, how transparent is thy virtue! Long speeches, loud professions, Scriptural quotations, funny anecdotes, vehement denunciations avail not to cover thy nakedness, which is very bald.

The President has issued a proclamation on martial law, — suspension of *habeas corpus* he terms it, meaning, of course, a suspension of the privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus*. Of this proclamation, I knew nothing until I saw it in the papers, and am not sorry that I did not. I question the wisdom or utility of a multiplicity of proclamations striking deep on great questions.

September 26, *Friday*. At several meetings of late the subject of deporting the colored race has been discussed. Indeed for months, almost from the commencement of this administration, it has been at times considered. More than a year ago it was thrust on me by Thompson and others in connection with the Chiriqui Grant, a claim to title from the Government of Central America of a large part of Costa Rica. Speculators used it as a means of disposing of that grant to our Government. It was a rotten remnant of an intrigue of the last administration. The President, encouraged by Blair and Smith, was disposed to favor it. Blair is honest and disinterested; perhaps Smith is so, yet I have not been favorably impressed with his zeal in behalf of the Chiriqui Association. As early as May, 1861, a great pressure was made upon me to enter into a coal contract with this company. The President was earnest in the matter; wished to send the negroes out of the country. Smith, with the Thompsons, urged and stimu-

lated him, and they were as importunate with me as the President. I spent two or three hours on different days looking over the papers, — titles, maps, reports, and evidence, — and came to the conclusion that there was fraud and cheat in the affair. It appeared to be a swindling speculation. Told the President I had no confidence in it, and asked to be released from its further consideration. The papers were then referred to Smith to investigate and report. After a month or two he reported strongly in favor of the scheme, and advised that the Navy Department should make an immediate contract for coal before foreign governments got hold of it. Mr. Toucey had investigated it. Commodore Engle had been sent out to examine the country and especially in relation to coal. The President was quite earnest in its favor, but, satisfied myself it was a job, I objected and desired to be excused from any participation in it. Two or three times it has been revived, but I have crowded off action. Chase gave me assistance on one occasion, and the scheme was dropped until this question of deporting colored persons came up, when Smith again brought forward Thompson's Chiriqui Grant. He made a skillful and taking report, embracing both coal and negroes. Each was to assist the other. The negroes were to be transported to Chiriqui to mine coal for the Navy, and the Secretary of the Navy was to make an immediate advance of $50,000 for coal not yet mined, — nor laborers obtained to mine it, nor any satisfactory information or proof that there was decent coal to be mined. I respectfully declined adopting his views. Chase and Stanton sustained me, and Mr. Bates to an extent. Blair, who first favored it, cooled off, as the question was discussed, but the President and Smith were persistent.

It came out that the governments and rival parties in Central America denied the legality of the Chiriqui Grant and Thompson's claim, — declared it was a bogus transaction. The President concluded he ought to be better satisfied on this point, and determined he would send out an

agent. At this stage of the case Senator Pomeroy appeared and took upon himself a negro emigrating colonization scheme. Would himself go out and take with him a cargo of negroes, and hunt up a place for them, — all, professedly, in the cause of humanity.

On Tuesday last the President brought forward the subject and desired the members of the Cabinet to each take it into serious consideration. He thought a treaty could be made to advantage, and territory secured to which the negroes could be sent. Thought it essential to provide an asylum for a race which we had emancipated, but which could never be recognized or admitted to be our equals. Several governments had signified their willingness to receive them. Mr. Seward said some were willing to take them without expense to us.

Mr. Blair made a long argumentative statement in favor of deportation. It would be necessary to rid the country of its black population, and some place must be found for them. He is strongly for deportation, has given the subject much thought, but yet seems to have no matured system which he can recommend. Mr. Bates was for compulsory deportation. The negro would not, he said, go voluntarily, had great local attachments but no enterprise or persistency. The President objected unequivocally to compulsion. Their emigration must be voluntary and without expense to themselves. Great Britain, Denmark, and perhaps other powers would take them. I remarked there was no necessity for a treaty, which had been suggested. Any person who desired to leave the country could do so now, whether white or black, and it was best to leave it so, — a voluntary system; the emigrant who chose to leave our shores could and would go where there were the best inducements.

These remarks seemed to strike Seward, who, I perceive, has been in consultation with the President and some of the foreign ministers, and on his motion the subject was then postponed, with an understanding it would

be taken up to-day. Mr. Bates had a very well prepared paper which he read, expressing his views. Little was said by any one else except Seward, who followed up my suggestions. But the President is not satisfied; says he wants a treaty. Smith says the Senate would never ratify a treaty conferring any power, and advised that Seward should make a contract.

The Governors of the loyal States called to-day on the President. They have had a meeting at Altoona, for what purpose I scarcely know. It was an unauthorized gathering of State Executives, doubtless with good intent; but I dislike these irregular and extraordinary movements. They must tend to good or evil, and I see no good. These officials had better limit their efforts within their legitimate sphere.

Admiral Gregory came to see me in relation to the ironclads which are being constructed under his superintendence. Enjoined upon him to have them completed by November at farthest. A demonstration is to be made on Charleston, and it will not do to depend upon the army even for coöperation there.

It is now almost a fortnight since the battle near Sharpsburg [Antietam]. The Rebels have recrossed the Potomac, but our army is doing nothing. The President says Halleck told him he should want two days more to make up his mind what to do. Great Heavens! what a General-in-Chief!

September 27, *Saturday*. Governor Tod[1] called on me to-day. Is hopeful and earnest. Thinks delay is necessary. His confidence in McClellan is unimpaired, and in the President it is greatly increased. Has full, unwavering confidence the country will be extricated and the Union maintained.

The Republican State Convention of New York, which

[1] David Tod, Governor of Ohio.

met at Syracuse, has nominated General James S. Wadsworth for Governor. There has been a good deal of peculiar New York management in this proceeding, and some disappointments. Morgan, who is, on the whole, a good Governor, though of loose notions in politics, would, I think, have been willing to have received a third nomination, but each of the rival factions of the Union party had other favorites. The Weed and Seward class wanted General Dix to be the conservative candidate, — not that they have any attachment for him or his views, but they have old party hate of Wadsworth. The positive Republican element selected Wadsworth. It is an earnest and fit selection of an earnest and sincere man. In bygone years both Wadsworth and Dix belonged to the school of Silas Wright Democrats. It would have been better had they (Seward and Weed) taken no active part. I am inclined to believe Weed so thought and would so have acted. He proposed going to Europe, chiefly, I understand, to avoid the struggle, but it is whispered that Seward had a purpose to accomplish, — that, finding certain currents and influences are opposed to him and his management of the State Department, he would be glad to retreat to the Senate.

Seymour, the Democratic candidate, has smartness, but not firm, rigid principles. He is an inveterate partisan, place-hunter, fond of office and not always choice of means in obtaining it. More of a party man than patriot. Is of the Marcy school rather than of the Silas Wright school, — a distinction well understood in New York.

September 29, *Monday*. Seward brought me to-day a long dispatch from Dudley, consul at Liverpool. Although his fears were somewhat simulated, I saw he was really excited and alarmed. He is easily frightened. I therefore talked on general subjects, but he turned away, said there were terrible combinations in Europe to break the blockade, that there was evidence of it in the documents he brought and wished me to read. They were getting eight

or ten steamers ready to break the blockade. I told him I had no apprehensions from any general concerted attack, such as he dreaded, but that I was annoyed by the sneaking method which the Englishmen practiced of stealing into Charleston in the darkness of the night. On reading the principal dispatch, I assured him there was no evidence in that document of any purpose to break the blockade, that there was no mention of an armed vessel by Consul Dudley, that there was activity among the merchant adventurers of Great Britain, stimulated by the Bull Run tidings, which they had just previously received. I did not doubt that British merchants were actively preparing to try to run the blockade, but we would be active in trying to catch them.

He seemed relieved yet not perfectly satisfied. We had some conversation in relation to letters of marque, which he favors. Wishes me to purchase the Baltic and give Comstock the command. Told him I trusted our naval cruisers, though some were not as fast as I wished, would perform the service, and that were we to buy and arm the Baltic, a naval officer must command her.

This scheme for Comstock and the Baltic is a key to the affected alarm. It has been concocted by Thurlow Weed, who has a job in view for himself or friends, perhaps both. Though Seward was somewhat frightened, his fears may have been greater in appearance than reality. He did not alarm me. It is shameful that an old profligate party-debaucher like Weed should have such influence, and Seward is mistaken in supposing I could be deceived by this connivance. His own fears of breaking the blockade were in a degree simulated. Weed is the prompter in this Comstock and Baltic intrigue. It is a job. Wrote Seward a letter of some length on the subject of cruising to suppress the slave trade under the treaty which he, without consulting the Cabinet, had recently negotiated with Great Britain. The letter is in answer to one addressed to him by Mr. Stuart, the British Chargé d'Affaires. The treaty

looks to me like a trap, and as if the Secretary of State had unwittingly "put his foot in it." He thinks it would be popular to make a demonstration against slavery and the slave trade,—would conciliate the Abolitionists, who distrust him, and be a feather in his administration of the State Department. But he has been inconsiderate or duped, perhaps both. I declined to furnish cruisers as requested, for it would weaken our position, and I cannot consent to cripple our naval strength at this time, but prefer to retain, and to act under, the belligerent right of search, to that of restricted right conferred by the treaty.

September 30, *Tuesday*. Little of importance at the Cabinet-meeting. The President laid before us the address of the loyal Governors who lately met at Altoona. Its publication has been delayed in expectation that Governor Bradford of Maryland would sign it, but nothing has been heard from him. His wife was here yesterday to get a pass to visit her son, who is a Rebel officer and cannot come to her. She therefore desires to go to him. Seward kindly procured the document for her. I am for exercising the gentle virtues when it can consistently and properly be done, but favor no social visitations like this. Let the Rebel perish away from the parents whom he has abandoned by deserting his country and fighting against his government.

The President informed us of his interview with Key, one of Halleck's staff, who said it was not the game of the army to capture the Rebels at Antietam, for that would give the North advantage and end slavery; it was the policy of the army officers to exhaust both sides and then enforce a compromise which would save slavery.

IV

D. D. Porter appointed to the Western Flotilla — Porter, Davis, and Dahlgren — The Cabinet on Emancipation — Admiral Du Pont — Stanton's Threat to resign — Dahlgren's Ambitions — The Norfolk Blockade — The Currency Question — Stuart's Raid — Spanish Claims as to Maritime Jurisdiction — The Case of the Steamer Bermuda — General Scott's Influence at the Beginning of the War — The Question of raising the Norfolk Blockade — A Hoax on Seward — Transfer of the Mississippi Fleet to the Navy — Seward and the Mails captured on Blockade-Runners.

October 1, *Wednesday*. Called this morning at the White House, but learned the President had left the city. The porter said he made no mention whither he was going, nor when he would return. I have no doubt he is on a visit to McClellan and the army. None of his Cabinet can have been aware of this journey.

Relieved Davis and appointed D. D. Porter to the Western Flotilla, which is hereafter to be recognized as a squadron. Porter is but a Commander. He has, however, stirring and positive qualities, is fertile in resources, has great energy, excessive and sometimes not over-scrupulous ambition, is impressed with and boastful of his own powers, given to exaggeration in relation to himself, — a Porter infirmity, — is not generous to older and superior living officers, whom he is too ready to traduce, but is kind and patronizing to favorites who are juniors, and generally to official inferiors. Is given to cliquism but is brave and daring like all his family. He has not the conscientious and high moral qualities of Foote to organize the flotilla, and is not considered by some of our best naval men a fortunate officer; has not in his profession, though he may have personally, what the sailors admire, "luck." It is a question, with his mixture of good and bad traits, how he will succeed. His selection will be unsatisfactory to many,

but his field of operation is peculiar, and a young and active officer is required for the duty to which he is assigned; it will be an incentive to juniors. If he does well I shall get no credit; if he fails I shall be blamed. No thanks in any event will be mine. Davis, whom he succeeds, is more of a scholar than sailor, has gentlemanly instincts and scholarly acquirements, is an intelligent but not an energetic, driving, fighting officer, such as is wanted for rough work on the Mississippi; is kind and affable, but has not the vim, dash, — recklessness perhaps is the better word, — of Porter.

Dahlgren, whose ambition is great, will, I suppose, be hurt that Porter, who is his junior, should be designated for the Mississippi command; and the President will sympathize with D., whom he regards with favor, while he has not great admiration or respect for Porter. Dahlgren has asked to be assigned to the special duty of capturing Charleston, but Du Pont has had that object in view for more than a year and made it his study. I cannot, though I appreciate Dahlgren, supersede the Admiral in this work.

The Emancipation Proclamation has, in its immediate effects, been less exciting than I had apprehended. It has caused but little jubilation on one hand, nor much angry outbreak on the other. The speculations as to the sentiments and opinions of the Cabinet in regard to this measure are ridiculously wild and strange. When it was first brought forward some six or eight weeks ago, all present assented to it. It was pretty fully discussed at two successive Cabinet-meetings, and the President consulted freely, I presume, with the members individually. He did with me. Mr. Bates desired that deportation, by force if necessary, should go with emancipation. Born and educated among the negroes, having always lived with slaves, he dreaded any step which should be taken to bring about social equality between the two races. The effect, he said, would be to degrade the whites without elevating the blacks. Demoralization, vice, and misery would follow.

Mr. Blair, at the second discussion, said that, while he was an emancipationist from principle, he had doubts of the expediency of such a movement as was contemplated. Stanton, after expressing himself earnestly in favor of the step proposed, said it was so important a measure that he hoped every member would give his opinion, whatever it might be, on the subject; two had not spoken, — alluding to Chase and myself.

I then spoke briefly of the strong exercise of power involved in the question, and the denial of Executive authority to do this act, but the Rebels themselves had invoked war on the subject of slavery, had appealed to arms, and they must abide the consequences. It was an extreme exercise of war powers, and under the circumstances and in view of the condition of the country and the magnitude of the contest I was willing to resort to extreme measures and avail ourselves of military necessity, always harsh and questionable. The blow would fall heavy and severe on those loyal men in the Slave States who clung to the Union and had most of their property in slaves, but they must abide the results of a conflict which we all deplored, and unless they could persuade their fellow citizens to embrace the alternative presented, it was their hard fortune to suffer with those who brought on the War. The slaves were now an element of strength to the Rebels, — were laborers, producers, and army attendants; were considered as property by the Rebels, and, if *property*, were subject to confiscation; if not property, but *persons* residing in the insurrectionary region, we should invite them as well as the whites to unite with us in putting down the Rebellion. I had made known my views to the President and could say here I gave my approval of the Proclamation. Mr. Chase said it was going a step farther than he had proposed, but he was glad of it and went into a very full argument on the subject. I do not attempt to report it or any portion of it, nor that of others, farther than to define the position of each when this important question was before us. Some-

thing more than a Proclamation will be necessary, for this step will band the South together, make opponents of some who now are friends and unite the Border States firmly with the Cotton States in resistance to the Government.

October 2, *Thursday.* Admiral Du Pont arrived to-day; looks hale and hearty. He is a skillful and accomplished officer. Has a fine address, is a courtier with perhaps too much finesse and management, resorts too much to extraneous and subordinate influences to accomplish what he might easily attain directly, and, like many naval officers, is given to cliques, — personal, naval clanship. This evil I have striven to break up, and, with the assistance of Secession, which took off some of the worst cases, have thus far been pretty successful, but there are symptoms of it in the South Atlantic Squadron, though I hope it is not serious. It is well that the officers should not only respect but have an attachment to their commanders, but not with injustice to others, nor at the expense of true patriotism and the service. But all that I have yet seen is, if not exactly what is wished, excusable. Certainly, while he continues to do his duty so well, I shall pass minor errors and sustain Du Pont. He gives me interesting details of incidents connected with the blockade, of the entrance to Stono, and affairs at James Island, where Benham committed a characteristic offense in one direction and Hunter a mistake in another.

October 3, *Friday.* Chase tells me that Stanton has called on him to say he deemed it his duty to resign, being satisfied he could no longer be useful in the War Department. There are, Chase says, unpaid requisitions on his table at this time to the amount of $45,000,000 from the War Department, and things are in every respect growing worse daily. Perhaps Chase really believes Stanton, who no more intends resigning than the President or Seward does.

I remarked that the disagreement between the Secretary of War and the generals in command must inevitably work disastrously, that I had for some time foreseen this, and the declaration of Stanton did not surprise me. He could scarcely do otherwise; he could not get along if these differences continued, but sooner or later he or the generals, or the whole, must go. My remarks were, I saw, not expected or acceptable. Chase said if Stanton went, he would go. It was due to Stanton and to ourselves that we should stand by him, and if one goes out, all had better go, certainly he would.

This, I told him, was not my view. If it were best for the country that all should go, then certainly all ought to leave without hesitation or delay; but it did not follow because one must leave, for any cause, that all should. I did not admire combinations among officials, preferred individuality, and did not think it advisable that we should all make our action dependent on the movements or difficulties of the Secretary of War, who, like all of us, had embarrassments and might not himself be exempt from error. There were many things in the Administration which he and I wished were different. He desired me to think the matter over. Said, with much feeling, things were serious, that he could not stand it, that the army was crushing him, and would crush the country. Says the President takes counsel of none but army officers in army matters, though the Treasury and Navy ought to be informed of the particulars of every movement. This is Stanton's complaint infused into Chase, and has some foundation, though it is but part of the evil. This demonstration of Stanton's is for effect and will fail.

October 7. Busy and a little indisposed for a day or two. The President returned from his visit to the army Saturday night. I met him yesterday when I was riding out. He was feeling well and much gratified with news just received from Corinth, which he stopped me to communicate.

There was an indisposition to press the subject of negro emigration to Chiriqui at the meeting of the Cabinet, against the wishes and remonstrances of the States of Central America. The President gave an interesting account of his visit to Antietam, South Mountain, etc., the late battle-fields.

Had a brief canvass for candidates for Navy chaplain. The President wishes Coleman appointed. I suggested that these offices should be distributed among the States, and he concurred.

A number of highly respectable persons in Maine memorialized the President in behalf of George Henry Preble, recently dismissed, desiring his restoration. Submitted the memorial, which had been inclosed to me by Senator Fessenden with a request I would do so in a pretty earnest letter. The President read it through, and said no one could be dismissed or punished without bringing up a host of sympathizing friends to resist the unpleasant but necessary action of the Government, and make the victim a martyr. Said he would do nothing in this case unless I advised it.

Governor Andrew of Massachusetts called upon me this morning, and we had a frank, free, and full interchange of views. He is impatient under the dilatory military operations and the growing ascendency of the army in civil affairs. Our views did not materially differ on the points discussed, though he has been impressed by Stanton, who dislikes many army officers.

October 8, *Wednesday*. Had a long interview with Governor Morgan on affairs in New York and the country. He says Wadsworth will be elected by an overwhelming majority; says the best arrangement would have been the nomination of Dix by the Democrats and then by the Republicans, so as to have had no contest. This was the scheme of Weed and Seward. Says a large majority of the convention was for renominating him (Morgan). I have

little doubt that Weed and Seward could have made Morgan's nomination unanimous, but Weed intrigued deeper and lost. He greatly preferred Morgan to Wadsworth, but, trying to secure Dix, lost both. Morgan says Aspinwall, whom he met here yesterday, had seen and got from McClellan the general army order just published sustaining the Emancipation Proclamation. Has some speculation in regard to McClellan's prospects, designs, and expectations as to the Presidency; doubts if he wants it, but thinks he cannot avoid it, — all which is of the New York political bill of fare.

October 9, *Thursday*. Letter to Senator Fessenden in regard to dismissal of Preble, stating the case, — the fault, the dismissal, and the impossibility of revoking it without injury to the service. The subject is a difficult one to handle. His friends believe he has great merit as an officer, when he has but little, whatever may be his learning, respectability, and worth as a gentleman. It will not do to tell his friends the truth, for they would denounce it as unjust; besides it is ungenerous to state unpleasant facts of a stricken man. A more difficult letter to answer was one from Captain Adams, who commanded the naval force off Pensacola in the spring of 1861.

Got off two long communications to Seward on the subject of reciprocal search and the belligerent right of search, the British treaty and the Danish agreement, law and instructions, — a queer medley of feeble diplomacy, poor administration, illegality, departure from usage, etc., etc.

Dahlgren is grieved with my action in his case. He desires, beyond almost any one, the high honors of his profession, and has his appetite stimulated by the partiality of the President, who does not hesitate to say to him and to me, that he will give him the highest grade if I will send him a letter to that effect, or a letter of appointment. Title irregularly obtained cannot add to Dahlgren's reputation, yet he cannot be reasoned with. He has yet rendered no

service afloat during the war, — has not been under fire, — and is not on the direct road for professional advancement. But he is a favorite with the President and knows it. The army practice of favoritism and political partyism cannot be permitted in the Navy. Its effect will be more demoralizing than that of the military, where it is bad enough. I am compelled, therefore, to stand between the President and Dahlgren's promotion, in order to maintain the service in proper condition. Dahlgren has the sagacity and professional intelligence to know I am right, and to appreciate my action though adverse to himself. He therefore now seeks service afloat. Wants an opportunity to acquire rank and distinction, but that opportunity must be a matter of favor. His last request was to be permitted to capture Charleston. This would give him *éclat*. I told him I could not rob Du Pont of that honor, but that if he wished I would give him an opportunity to participate, and understood from him it would be acceptable. I therefore tendered him an ironclad and the place of ordnance officer, he retaining his position at the head of the Bureau, with leave of absence as a volunteer to fight.

My proposition has not been received in the manner I expected. He thinks the tender of a single ship to an officer who has had a navy yard and is now in the Bureau, derogatory, yet, wishing active service as the means of promotion, intimates he will accept and resign the Bureau. This I can't countenance or permit. It would not meet the views of the President, would be wrong to the service, and a great wrong to the country, for him to leave the Ordnance Bureau, where he is proficient and can be most useful. His specialty is in that branch of the service; he knows his own value there at this time, and for him to leave it now would be detrimental to the object he desires to attain. He is not conscious of it, but he has Dahlgren more than the service in view. Were he to be present at the capture of Charleston as a volunteer who had temporarily left the Bureau for that special service, it would redound

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to his credit, and make him at least second to Du Pont in the glory of the achievement.

October 10, *Friday*. Some vague and indefinite tidings of a victory by Buell in Kentucky in a two days' fight at Perryville. We hear also of the capture of batteries by the Navy on the St. John's in Florida, but have no particulars.

A telegram from Delano [1] at New Bedford tells me that the pirate or Rebel steamer 290, built in Great Britain and manned by British seamen, fresh from England, has captured and burnt five whaling vessels off the Western Islands. The State Department will, I suppose, submit to this evidence that England is an underhand auxiliary to the Rebels, be passive on the subject, and the Navy Department will receive as usual torrents of abuse.

At Cabinet to-day, among other subjects, that of trade at Norfolk was under consideration. We were told the people are in great distress and trouble, cannot get subsistence nor make sale of anything by reason of the blockade. Chase thought it very hard, was disposed to open the port or relax the blockade. Stanton opposed both; said Norfolk was hot with rebellion, and aid to Norfolk would relieve Richmond. The President, in the kindness of his heart, was at first inclined to grant relief. Chase said I had instructed the squadron to rigidly enforce the blockade. I admitted this to be true as regarded Norfolk and all the blockaded ports, and assured him I should not relax unless by an Executive order, or do otherwise until we had another policy. That to strictly maintain the blockade caused suffering I had no doubt; that was the chief object of the blockade. I was doing all in my power to make rebellion unpopular, and as a means, I would cause the whole insurrectionary region to suffer until they laid down their arms and became loyal. The case was not one of sympathy but of duty. Chase urged that they might be permitted to bring out and exchange some of their products, such as

[1] B. F. Delano, Naval Constructor.

shingles, staves, tar, etc., which they could trade for necessaries that were indispensable. "Then," said I, "raise the blockade. Act in good faith with all; let us have no favoritism. That is my policy. You must not use the blockade for domestic traffic or to enrich a few."

The President said these were matters which he had not sufficiently considered. My remarks had opened a view that he had not taken. He proposed that Seward and Chase should see what could be done.

There is, I can see, a scheme for permits, special favors, Treasury agents, and improper management in all this; not that Chase is to receive any pecuniary benefit himself, but in his political aspirations he is courting, and will give authority to, General Dix, who has, he thinks, political influence. It is much less, I apprehend, than Chase supposes. Dix is, I presume, as clear of pecuniary gain as Chase, but he has on his staff and around him a set of bloodsuckers who propose to make use of the blockade as a machine to enrich themselves. A few favorites design to monopolize the trade of Norfolk, and the Government is to be at the expense of giving them this monopoly by absolute non-intercourse, enforced by naval vessels to all but themselves. As we have absolute possession of Norfolk and its vicinity, there is no substantial reason for continuing the blockade, and it can benefit none but Army and Treasury favorites. General Dix has, I regret to see, lax notions. Admiral Lee holds him in check; he appeals to Chase, who is very severe towards the Rebels, except in certain matters of trade and Treasury patronage carrying with them political influence.

Seward wishes me to modify my second letter on the subject of instructions under the British slavery treaty, so as to relieve him in a measure. I have no objection; he does not appear to advantage in the proceedings. In a scheme to obtain popularity for himself, he has been secretive, hasty, inconsiderate, overcunning, and weak. The Englishmen have detected his weak side and taken advan-

tage of it. His vanity and egotism have been flattered, and he has undertaken an ostentatious exhibition of his power to the legations, and at the same time would secure favor with the Abolitionists and Anti-Slavery men by a most singular contrivance, which, if carried into effect, would destroy our naval efficiency. His treaty binds us to surrender for a specific purpose the general belligerent right of search in the most important latitudes. The effect would be in the highest degree advantageous to the Rebels, and wholly in their interest. It seems to me a contrivance to entrap our Government, into which the Secretary of State, without consulting his associates, has been unwittingly seduced.

D. D. Porter left Wednesday to take command of the Mississippi Squadron, with the appointment of Acting Admiral. This is an experiment, and the results not entirely certain. Many officers of the Navy who are his seniors will be dissatisfied, but his juniors may, by it, be stimulated. The river naval service is unique. Foote performed wonders and dissipated many prejudices. The army has fallen in love with the gunboats and wants them in every creek. Porter is wanting in some of the best qualities of Foote, but excels him perhaps in others. The service requires great energy, great activity, abundant resources. Porter is full of each, but is reckless, improvident, often too presuming and assuming. In an interview on Wednesday, I endeavored to caution him on certain points and to encourage him in others. In conformity with his special request, General McClernand is to command the army with which the Navy coöperates. This gratifies him, for he dreads and protests against association with any West Point general; says they are too self-sufficient, pedantic, and unpractical.

The currency and financial questions will soon be as troublesome as the management of the armies. In making Treasury notes or irredeemable paper of any kind a legal tender, and in flooding the country with inconvertible

paper money down to a dollar and fractional parts of a dollar, the Secretary of the Treasury may obtain momentary ease and comfort, but woe and misery will follow to the country. Mr. Chase has a good deal of ability, but has never made finance his study. His general ideas appear to be crudely sound, but he does not act upon them, and his principal and most active and persistent advisers are of a bad school. The best and soundest financiers content themselves with calmly stating sound financial truths. He has not made his plans a subject of Cabinet consultation. Perhaps it is best he should not. I think he has advised with them but little, individually. Incidentally he and I have once or twice had conversations on these matters, and our views appeared to correspond, but when he has come to act, a different policy has been pursued. It will add to the heavy burdens that overload the people.

Singular notions prevail with some of our Cabinet associates, — such as have made me doubt whether the men were serious in stating them. On one occasion, something like a year ago, Smith expressed a hope that the Treasury would hasten, and as speedily as possible get out the fractional parts of a dollar, in order to put a stop to hoarding. Chase assured Smith he was hurrying on the work as fast as possible. I expressed astonishment and regret, and insisted that the more paper he issued, the more hoarding of coin there would be and the less money we should have; that all attempts in all countries and times to cheat gold and silver had proved failures and always would; that money was one thing and currency another; convertible paper was current for money, inconvertible paper was not; that two currencies could not circulate at the same time in any community; that the vicious and poor currency always superseded the better, and must in the nature of things.

Chase, without controverting these remarks, said I belonged to the race of hard-money men, whose ideas were not exactly adapted to these times. Smith was perfectly

confident that hoarding up money would cease when there was no object in it, and if the Treasury would furnish us with paper there would be no object to hoard. He was confident it would do the work. I asked Chase if he indorsed such views, but could get no satisfactory answer. The Treasury is pursuing a course which will unsettle all values.

October 11, *Saturday*. We have word which seems reliable that Stuart's Rebel cavalry have been to Chambersburg in the rear of McClellan, while he was absent in Philadelphia stopping at the Continental Hotel. I hope neither statement is correct. But am apprehensive that both may be true.

October 13, *Monday*. We have the mortifying intelligence that the Rebel cavalry rode entirely around our great and victorious Army of the Potomac, crossing the river above it, pushing on in the rear beyond the Pennsylvania line into the Cumberland Valley, then east and south, recrossing the Potomac below McClellan and our troops, near the mouth of the Monocacy. It is the second time this feat has been performed by J. E. B. Stuart around McClellan's army. The first was on the York Peninsula. It is humiliating, disgraceful.

In this raid the Rebels have possessed themselves of a good deal of plunder, reclothed their men from our stores, run off a thousand horses, fat cattle, etc., etc. It is not a pleasant fact to know that we are clothing, mounting, and subsisting not only our troops but the Rebels also. McClellan had returned from Philadelphia with his wife, a most estimable and charming lady who cannot have been gratified with this exhibit of her husband's public duties. He was at Harper's Ferry when this raid of Stuart took place. His opponents will triumph in this additional evidence of alleged inertness and military imbecility. It is customary for some of our generals and other officers to have their

wives with them in the camp and field. The arrangement does not make them better soldiers. I wish it were prohibited. Some naval officers cite army precedents when asking the company of their wives on shipboard.

Wrote Seward in reply to a novel and extraordinary assumption of Tassara, the Spanish Minister, who claims a maritime jurisdiction of six miles around the island of Cuba, instead of three, the recognized coast jurisdiction by international law. Seward is disposed to concede it to Spain, because she is better disposed than the other powers, and he flatters himself he can detach her from them, if we will be liberal, — that is, give up our rights. It is among the most singular things of these singular times, that our Secretary of State supposes that he and a foreign minister can set aside established usage, make and unmake international law, can enlarge or circumscribe at pleasure national jurisdiction and authority. I have remonstrated with him most emphatically against any such surrender of our national rights, warned him that the country never would assent, at all events during hostilities; but there is a difficulty and delicacy in so managing these questions, when the Secretary of State, with loose notions of law, usage, and his own legitimate duty, has undertaken to set aside law, that is embarrassing. He has a desire to make instead of to execute national law, paying little attention to the practice of nations; does not inquire into them until after he has been committed. The foreigners detect and profit by this weakness.

October 14, *Tuesday*. The Secretary of State sends me an important dispatch from Stuart, British Chargé d'Affaires during the absence of Lord Lyons, in which he undertakes to object, unofficially, to the purchase by the Government of the steamer Bermuda, a prize captured last April, until the judgment of the court shall have been pronounced. Seward gives in, cringes under these supercilious and arrogant claims and assumptions. It sometimes

appears to me there is a scheme among some of the legations to see how far they can impose upon our Secretary of State by flattery and pretension. I have written a reply which will be likely, I think, to settle Mr. Stuart, and possibly annoy Mr. Seward, who, since the affair of the Trent, when at first he took high and untenable ground, has lost heart and courage, and is provokingly submissive to British exactions. I hope he will let Stuart have my letter. It touches on some points which I wish to force on the attention of the English Government.

Stanton read a dispatch from General Pope, stating that the Indians in the Northwest had surrendered and he was anxious to execute a number of them. The Winnebagoes, who have not been in the fight, are with him, and he proposes to ration them at public expense through the winter. He has, Stanton says, destroyed the crops of the Indians, etc. I was disgusted with the whole thing; the tone and opinions of the dispatch are discreditable. It was not the production of a good man or a great one. The Indian outrages have, I doubt not, been horrible; what may have been the provocation we are not told. The Sioux and Ojibbeways are bad, but the Winnebagoes have good land which white men want and mean to have.

The evening papers contain a partisan speech from John Van Buren,[1] in which he introduces a letter of General Scott, dated the 3d of March, 1861, addressed to Seward. It was familiar. I have heard it read twice by General S. himself, the first time, directly after the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln, in the War Department, but I had the impression it was addressed to the President instead of Seward. For what reason it was placed in the hands of John Van Buren I do not understand. The General thought much of this letter, and wrote it, as I supposed, to influence the then incoming administration, but it was wholly inconclusive

[1] A son of Martin Van Buren and a lawyer of ability. The speech was made in the Cooper Institute, New York, at a meeting to ratify the nomination of Horatio Seymour as Governor of New York by the Democrats.

when decision was wanted. He was in those days listened to by both the President and Secretary of State, and his indecisive policy had probably an effect on them as well as others. I have since come to the conclusion that the General's own course was shaped by Seward, and that, after Seward put him aside, took Meigs into his confidence, and got up the military expedition to Pickens without his knowledge, General Scott, in justification of himself and to show his own views independent of the Secretary of State, was decidedly for the Union.

His influence in the early months of the Administration was, in some respects, unfortunate. It was a maze of uncertainty and indecision. He was sincerely devoted to the Union and anxious that the Rebellion should be extinguished, yet shrank from fighting. Seward had brought him into his policy of meeting aggression with concession. Blockade some of the worst cities, or shut up their ports, guard them closely, collect duties on shipboard, or "let the wayward sisters go in peace."[1] His object seemed to be to avoid hostilities, but to throw the labor of the conflict on the Navy if there was to be war. He still strove, however, as did Seward, to compromise difficulties by a national convention to remodel the Constitution, though aware the Democrats would assent to nothing. General Scott inaugurated the system of frontiers, and did not favor the advance of our armies into the rebellious States. The time for decisive action, he thought, had passed, and those who were for prompt, energetic measures, which, just entering on administrative duties, they desired, were checked by the General-in-Chief.

October 15, *Wednesday.* General Dix came to see me in relation to the blockade of Norfolk. Says Admiral Lee is extremely rigid, allows no traffic; that the people of Norfolk are suffering, though in his opinion one half the people

[1] General Scott's expression as given in the letter referred to was, "Wayward sisters, depart in peace."

are loyal. The place, he says, is in the military occupation of the Government and therefore is not liable to, and cannot, be blockaded. Tells me he has been reading on the question, and consulting General Halleck, who agrees with him. I told him if Norfolk was not, and could not be, a blockaded port, I should be glad to be informed of the fact; that the President had declared the whole coast and all ports blockaded from the eastern line of Virginia to the Rio Grande, with the exception of Key West. Congress, though preferring the closing of the ports, had recognized and approved the fact, and authorized the President from time to time, as we recovered possession, to open ports at his discretion by proclamation. That he had so opened the ports of Beaufort, Port Royal, and New Orleans, but not Norfolk. If he was disposed to raise the blockade of that port, I should not oppose it but be glad of it. That I had so informed the President and others, but there was unqualified and emphatic opposition in the War Department to such a step. If he would persuade the Secretary of War to favor the measure, there would be little resistance in any other quarter. Perhaps he and General Halleck could overrule the objections of the Secretary of War. That I intended to occupy no equivocal attitude. This was not to be a sham blockade, so far as I was concerned. I thought, with him, that as Norfolk was in the military occupancy of our armies and to continue so, there was no substantial reason for continuing the blockade; that not only humanity towards the people but good policy on the part of the Administration required we should extend and promote commercial intercourse. Commerce promotes friendship. It would induce the people in other localities to seek the same privileges by sustaining the Union cause. That, as things were, Admiral Lee was doing his duty and obeying instructions in rigidly enforcing the blockade. That I was opposed to favoritism. There should be either intercourse or non-intercourse; if the port was open to trade, all our citizens, and foreigners also, should be treated alike.

"But," said General Dix, "I don't want the blockade of Norfolk raised; that won't answer."

"Yet you tell me there is no blockade; that it has ended, and cannot exist because we are in military possession."

"Well," said he, "that is so; we are in military occupancy and must have our supplies."

"That," I replied, "is provided for. Admiral Lee allows all vessels with *army* supplies, duly permitted, to pass."

"But," continued he, "we must have more than that. The people will suffer."

"Then," said I, "they must return to duty and not persist in rebellion. The object of the blockade is to make them suffer. I want no double-dealing or false pretenses. There is, or there is not, a blockade. If there is, I shall, until the President otherwise directs, enforce it. If there is not, the world should know it. Should the blockade be modified, we shall conform to the modifications."

The General thought it unnecessary to tell the world the blockade was modified or removed. I thought we should make the changes public as the declaration of blockade itself, if we would maintain good faith. He seemed to have no clear conception of things; thought there ought to have never been a blockade. In that I concurred. Told him I had taken that view at the commencement, but had been overruled; we had placed ourselves in a wrong position at the beginning, made the Rebels belligerents, given them nationality, — an error and an anomaly. It was one of Mr. Seward's mistakes.

A letter has been shown about, and is to-day published, purporting to be from General Kearny, who fell at Chantilly. The letter is addressed to O. S. Halstead of New Jersey. It expresses his views and shows his feelings towards McClellan, who, he says, "positively has no talents." How many officers have written similar private letters is unknown. "We have no generals," says this letter of Kearny.

October 17, *Friday.* The question of traffic at Norfolk was discussed in Cabinet. General Dix has, I see, made some headway. Stanton wanted to transfer the whole subject of permits for army supplies and intercourse to General Dix. Chase thought there should be leave granted for return cargoes also. I requested, if there was to be a modification of the blockade, that it should be distinctly understood and announced to what extent. If traffic was to be authorized, it should be publicly known. Let us not have the shame, demoralization, and wrong of making a measure of this kind a cover for favoritism. No distinct conclusion was arrived at.

October 18, *Saturday.* The ravages by the roving steamer 290, *alias* Alabama, are enormous. England should be held accountable for these outrages. The vessel was built in England and has never been in the ports of any other nation. British authorities were warned of her true character repeatedly before she left.

Seward called on me in some excitement this P.M., and wished me to meet the President, himself, Stanton, and Halleck at the War Department relative to important dispatches just received. As we walked over together, he said we had been very successful in getting a dispatch, which opened up the whole Rebel proceedings, — disclosed their plans and enabled us to prepare for them; that it was evident there was a design to make an immediate attack on Washington by water, and it would be well to buy vessels forthwith if we had not a sufficient number ready for the purpose. When we entered Stanton's room, General Halleck was reading the document alluded to and examining the maps. No one else was present. Stanton had left the Department. The President was in the room of the telegraph operator.

The document purported to be a dispatch from General Cooper, Assistant Secretary of War of the Confederates, to one of the Rebel agents in England. A question arose as

to the authenticity of the dispatch. Halleck, who is familiar with Cooper's signature, doubted after examining the paper if *this* was genuine. Adjutant-General Thomas was sent for and requested to bring Cooper's signature for comparison. Seward then took the papers and commenced reading aloud. The writer spoke of "the mountains of Arlington," "the fleet of the Potomac," "the fleet of the North," etc. I interrupted Seward, and said it was a clumsy manufacture; that the dispatch could have been written by no American, certainly not by General Cooper, or any person conversant with our affairs or the topography of the country; that there were no mountains of Arlington, no fleet of the Potomac, or fleet of the North. General Halleck mentioned one or two other points which impressed him that the dispatch was bogus. The President came in while we were criticizing the document, the reading of which was concluded by Seward, when the President took the papers and map to examine them. General Thomas soon brought a number of Cooper's signatures, and all were satisfied at a glance that the purported signature was fictitious.

Seward came readily to the opinion that the papers were bogus and that the consul, or minister, — he did not say which, — had been sadly imposed upon, — sold. The dispatch had, he said, cost a good deal of money. It was a palpable cheat. It may be a question whether the British authorities have not connived at it, to punish our inquisitive countrymen for trying to pry into their secrets.

It is just five weeks since the Battle of Antietam, and the army is quiet, reposing in camp. The country groans, but nothing is done. Certainly the confidence of the people must give way under this fatuous inaction. We have sinister rumors of peace intrigues and strange management. I cannot give them credit, yet I know little of what is being done. The Secretary of War is reticent, vexed, disappointed, and communicates nothing. Neither he nor McClellan will inspire or aid the other.

Chase is pursuing a financial policy which I fear will prove disastrous, perhaps ruinous. His theories in regard to gold and currency appear to me puerile.

General Dix is pressing schemes in regard to the blockade and trade at Norfolk which are corrupt and demoralizing. Dix himself is not selling licenses, but the scoundrels who surround him are, and he can hardly be ignorant of the fact. The gang of rotten officers on his staff have sent him here. One of the worst has his special confidence, and Dix is under the influence of this cunning, bad man. He has plundering thieves about him, — some, I fear, as destitute of position as honesty.

McClellan is not accused of corruption, but of criminal inaction. His inertness makes the assertions of his opponents prophetic. He is sadly afflicted with what the President calls the "slows." Many believe him to be acting on the army programme avowed by Key.

October 24, *Friday*. Wrote Chase this A.M. respecting traffic at Norfolk. The army officers are crowding Admiral Lee with permits to favorites obtained in abundance through General Dix. All is in violation of good faith as regards the blockade. I wrote Chase that all trade should be interdicted or it should be opened to all; that there ought to be no sham blockade to pamper army corruptionists; that if there is a blockade it should be rigidly enforced, excluding all; or let us open the port to all. The subject was discussed in Cabinet. Previous to introducing it, I had some talk with Chase. He fully agreed with me, but preferred opening the port, while, under the representations of Stanton, I doubted the expediency. But we agreed that one policy or the other ought to be adopted, but it should not be equivocal. When the subject was introduced, Chase flinched, as he often does, and he did not sustain me, though he did not oppose me, — said nothing. Seward entreated that the question might be got along with for ten days, until after the New York election. He

did not wish to have Dix and the interested fellows around him take cause of offense at this moment. Stanton said he thought I had consented to traffic under permits by Dix. I replied that I had not, and that he could have had no such thought from anything I had said or done; that I was opposed to traffic through any blockaded ports and to return cargoes even in army transports, or vessels carrying army supplies.

October 25, *Saturday.* General Wadsworth,[1] Mr. Fenton, and others urgently insist on some changes in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, of masters who, they claim, are active partisans. But they made no clear case. Told them, I was opposed to the policy of removals of competent officers unless for active, offensive partisanship; that any man was entitled to enjoy and exercise his opinion without molestation. General W. concurred with me but understood there were such masters within the prescribed rules. Told them that from any facts I had received I would only remove Fairion, master machinist, who, it is shown, is so immersed in politics as to neglect his business, and is a candidate for comptroller. As he manifests a willingness and intention to leave the service for another place, I think he can depart a few days in advance without detriment. This taking advantage of an excited election to thrust miserable partisans into places which they are often indifferently qualified to fill, I dislike, and so expressed myself to General W., who assented fully to my views.

Some discussion was had yesterday in Cabinet in regard to the course which should be pursued towards General J. C. Davis, who killed Major-General Nelson. The grand jury, it is reported, have ignored the bill in the civil case. The question was whether the military ought to take notice of the homicide after the civil authorities declined. Chase

[1] Major-General James S. Wadsworth, United States Volunteers, in charge of the defense of Washington, and later an unsuccessful Republican candidate for Governor of New York.

and Blair thought the military should. Stanton opposed it. Seward thought the affair might be looked into. I remarked that if the transaction had occurred in the Navy, we should at least have had a court of inquiry.

November 1, *Saturday*. The work on the ironclad turret steamer Passaic is nearly finished. Ericsson makes a proposition to fire the fifteen-inch gun through the orifice instead of protruding the piece. I have no faith in it. Fox was at first disposed to consider it favorably but doubtingly. Have sent Fox, Admiral Smith, and Dahlgren to New York to witness test experiment.

November 4, *Tuesday*. Further news of the depredations by the Alabama. Ordered Dacotah, Ino, Augusta, etc., on her track. The President read in Cabinet to-day his sensible letter of the 13th of October to General McClellan, ordering him to move and to pass down on the east side of the Blue Ridge. McClellan did not wish to move at all. Was ordered by Halleck, and when he found he must move, said he would go down the west side of the mountains, but when he finally started went on the east side without advising H. or the President.

Stanton, whose dislike of McC. increases, says that Halleck does not consider himself responsible for army movements or deficiencies this side of the mountains, of which he has had no notice from General McClellan, who neither reports to him nor to the Secretary of War. All his official correspondence is with the President direct and no one else.

The President did not assent to the last remarks of Stanton, which were more sneering in manner than words, but said Halleck should be, and would be, considered responsible, for he (the President) had told him (Halleck) that he would at any time remove McC. when H. required it, and that he (the President) would take the entire responsibility of the removal.

Mr. Bates quietly suggested that Halleck should take command of the army in person. But the President said, and all the Cabinet concurred in the opinion, that H. would be an indifferent general in the field, that he shirked responsibility in his present position, that he, in short, is a moral coward, worth but little except as a critic and director of operations, though intelligent and educated.

Congress wisely ordered a transfer of all war vessels on the Mississippi to the Navy. It was not by my suggestion or procurement that this law was passed, but it was proper. It has, however, greatly disturbed Stanton, who, supported by Halleck and Ellet, opposes a transfer of the ram fleet as not strictly within the letter, though it is undoubtedly the intent of the law. That Ellet should wish a distinct command is not surprising. It is characteristic. He is full of zeal to overflowing; is not, however, a naval man, but is, very naturally, delighted with an independent naval command in this adventurous ram service. It is, however, a pitiful business on the part of Stanton and Halleck, who should take an administrative view and who should be aware there cannot be two distinct commands on the river under different orders from different Departments without endangering collision.

Seward sent me a day or two since a singular note, supercilious in tone, in relation to mails captured on blockade-runners, telling me it is deemed expedient that instructions be given to our naval officers that such mails should not be opened, but that as speedily as possible they be forwarded. Who deems it expedient to give these instructions, which would be illegal, abject, and an unauthorized and unwarranted surrender of our maritime rights? No man the least conversant with admiralty or statute law, usage, or the law of prize, or who knowingly maintains national rights can deem it expedient to give such instructions, and I have declined doing so. The President must give the order, which he will never do if he looks into the subject. This is another exhibition of the weakness and

the loose and inconsiderate administrative management of the Secretary of State, who really seems to suppose himself the Government and his whims supreme law. We had this subject up last August, and I then pointed out the impropriety of any attempt to depart from law and usage, but so shaped a set of instructions as to relieve him; but this proceeding is worse than the former. I shall make no farther effort to relieve him, and have told him I cannot go beyond my instructions of the 18th of August last. He professes to believe something more is necessary to keep the English authorities quiet. The truth is he then and now undertook, in a spirit of self-conceit, to do more than he is authorized. Stuart, the English Chargé, knows it; has, I have no doubt, pressed Seward to have instructions issued to our officers which shall come up to the promises he ostentatiously made. He is conscious, I think, that he has been bamboozled, but he will not be able to extricate himself by bamboozling me. His course is sometimes very annoying, and exhibits an indifference which is astonishing in one of his long experience and intellectual capacity.

V

A Private Grief — Burnside succeeds McClellan in Command of the Army of the Potomac — The Modification of the Norfolk Blockade — The Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy — The Question of New Navy Yards — Count Gurowski and his Book — Commander Preble's Case — The Division of Virginia — A Roundabout Proceeding of Seward's — Seward's Resignation and the Discussion in Regard to it — Chase tenders his Resignation and the President sees a Way out — Cabinet Rivalries — Seward and Chase requested to withdraw their Resignations — Depredations of the Alabama — Cabinet Discussion of the West Virginia Question — Butler superseded by Banks at New Orleans — The Party Spirit.

December 3. It is a month since I have opened this book and been able to make any record of current events. A pressure of public business, the preparation of my Annual Report, and domestic sorrows have consumed all my waking moments. A light, bright, cherub face, which threw its sunshine on our household when this book was last opened, has disappeared forever. My dear Hubert, who was a treasure garnered in my heart, is laid beside his five brothers and sisters in Spring Grove. Well has it been for me that overwhelming public duties have borne down upon me in these sad days. Alas, frail life! amid the nation's grief I have my own.

A change of the commander of the Army of the Potomac has taken place. Stanton is gratified. McClellan is ordered to Trenton, and Burnside succeeds him. Burnside will doubtless do his best, is patriotic and amiable, and, had he greater powers and grasp, would make an acceptable and popular, if not a great, general. I hope the War Department will sustain him more earnestly than it did McClellan. Of the change I knew nothing and wished to know nothing when it was made. I had expected it might take place earlier, when McClellan seemed testing the forbearance of the Government, and not one good word was

said for him. It seemed there could not be, but after he commenced to move, I was less prepared to see him displaced and the announcement came with a shock. We shall see what Burnside can do and how he will be seconded by other generals and the War Department.

The November elections have not been favorable to the Administration. To a great extent its friends are responsible. Some active and leading Republican minds have ability and talent to abuse, berate, traduce, often in secret, and assail, and these gifts are directed against the Administration. The worst of them are opposed to the Government and violently opposed to its being administered by Democrats.

The efforts of the officers under General Dix and [of] the General himself, aided by the War and Treasury Departments, have finally so far prevailed that the blockading squadron is to allow vessels to pass on a permit from General Dix's military staff. I declined to recognize any such practice unless by special order of the President, who can if he pleases modify the blockade. To allow exports and imports is inconsistent with a rigid and honest blockade. There has been a good deal of manœuvring, much backing and filling. The prize is great. Civilians, quasi-military men, etc., are interested, — men of political influence. Dix has made three distinct visits to Washington on the subject. Some of his staff and Treasury agents were urgent. I do not think military operations at Fortress Monroe and its vicinity were suspended or that they suffered by the absence of Dix. Repeated discussions took place in the Cabinet. My determination being fixed, it became necessary the President should issue an order. Chase and Stanton each prepared a form for the President to sign. Stanton's was adopted. When the President signed it, I proposed that Nicolay should make duplicates, one for me. Stanton thought it unnecessary, said he would make and send me a perfect copy as soon as he reached the War Department. This was on Tuesday, the 11th of November.

On Wednesday, having business with the President, I asked if he retained a copy. He said he did not, but, remembering Stanton's promise and my objections to the proceedings, he manifested his surprise that Stanton had failed to supply me; wished me to call on Stanton and get it. I did stop at the War Department on my return. S. professed astonishment, said he had entirely forgotten it, that it was in his pocket, had never been taken out. On Friday morning, the 14th, I received from Captain Turner, senior officer at Hampton Roads, a letter inclosing a copy of the President's order, with a letter from Stanton to General Dix inclosing it, dated the very day on which the order was issued, although he assured me the dispatch was in his pocket wholly forgotten. The copy which he sent me and the copy from the naval officer at Hampton Roads reached me at the same time. Turner had properly refused to recognize the order sent by Stanton as authentic, — would not obey it unless received through the Navy Department. It is unnecessary to comment further than to say there was something more than right in the transaction.

My Annual Report, which is necessarily long, appears to have been well received. The New York papers give it approval, some of them reluctant approval. The *Herald* says it is a document highly creditable to the country but not to the Secretary. I am informed this article is by Bartlett, who continues to be malignantly angry because I would not purchase vessels through his agency. He confessed to a friend that he had been disappointed in not making a hundred thousand dollars through the Navy Department, and sent me word that I should feel his vengeance, for he controlled the New York press. It seems the papers of that city are, on naval matters, shaped and directed much as he wishes and said they should be. The *Times*, where Thurlow Weed influences the pliant Raymond, says the Report is too much in detail, is not what it should be, but is able, etc. The *Evening Post* says nothing, publishes a brief sum-

mary only. The *World* publishes it in full without a word of comment. The *National Intelligencer* compliments it highly, and so do several of the Philadelphia papers which have been sent me. The *World* of to-day has a complimentary article on the Secretary of the Navy.

Some grumbling I anticipated from New London and its vicinity for doing my duty. I last March, and again in June, addressed Congress through the Navy Committee on the need of a suitable navy yard and establishment for the construction of iron vessels and iron armor. The suggestions drew from the city of Philadelphia an offer of League Island. I thought, if the latter place was suitable, a change might be made without increasing the number of yards. Congress authorized me to accept it, but Senator Foster of Connecticut procured a condition to be affixed that the Board which was to examine League Island with a view of substituting it for the most limited yard should also examine and report on the harbor of New London, and the Rhode Island Senators had a further proviso that the waters of Narragansett Bay should be also examined by the same board.

For an iron navy yard and establishment neither myself nor any one else entertained a thought of New London or Narragansett Bay, nor would either be exactly suitable for iron vessels and machinery; fresh water is essential. Neither would Congress consent, nor does the country require four navy yards east of the Hudson. But the Board I appointed had some disagreement. Admiral Stringham, Chairman of the Board, and a resident of Brooklyn, had a rival feeling as regards Philadelphia, and a partiality for New London, where he had studied in his youth. Professor Bache, Superintendent of the Coast Survey, who was one of the Board, was even adroit. The Board was divided, and, forgetful of the great object in view, — that of an establishment for iron vessels in fresh water and the suitability of League Island, — a majority reported that New London was the best place for such a navy yard. Not

unlikely the fact that I am from Connecticut had its influence with some of them, though it has not with me. I am authorized by Congress to accept League Island if the Board report it suitable, but I am not authorized to accept of New London or Narragansett Bay. But I conclude to take no final step without giving Congress an opportunity to decide, though stating I propose to accept of League Island, which would change but not increase the number of yards, if Congress did not disapprove. I am acting for the country, not for any section, or city, or set of speculators, and though I have a partiality for my State, and for New London, where I have many excellent friends, yet I should be unworthy of my place were I to permit local or selfish interests of any kind to control me against what is really best for the country. But, while convinced I am right, and deserving of approval, I shall encounter censure and abuse in quarters where I desire the good opinions of my fellow citizens.

December 4, *Thursday.* The Members of Congress from Minnesota are urging the President vehemently to give his assent to the execution of three hundred Indian captives, but they will not succeed. Undoubtedly the savage wretches have been guilty of great atrocities, and I have as little doubt the stories of their barbarities, bad enough in themselves, are greatly exaggerated. What may have been the aggressions and provocations which led the Indians on is not told us. When the intelligent Representatives of a State can deliberately besiege the Government to take the lives of these ignorant barbarians by wholesale, after they have surrendered themselves prisoners, it would seem the sentiments of the Representatives were but slightly removed from the barbarians whom they would execute. The Minnesotians are greatly exasperated and threaten the Administration if it shows clemency.

Some of the Members of Congress begin early to manifest a perverse and bad spirit. Foremost as regards the

Navy, of which he should be the friend and organ, is John P. Hale, Chairman of the Senate Naval Committee. He is censorious to all the Administration, but especially to the Navy Department, which, instead of supporting, he omits no opportunity to assail and embarrass. Calvert, of the House, is equally virulent. He thinks he has cause to be angry with me, but has not the courage and manliness to declare the reason or motive which governs him. Some months since he made application to me to order the return of one or two slaves who were on the Potomac Flotilla, or in the navy yard, to his sister, who, he says, is a deserving loyal lady residing in Virginia near the Potomac. I of course declined. I also declined appointing some one to be midshipman under the general clause, whom he wished selected, as I declined in many similar cases. He is also dissatisfied because the Naval School is not immediately returned to Annapolis, which is within his district.

The lowest bidder for one of the large steamers lives at Chester. Other competitors are greatly excited and charge him with being disloyal. This charge is, I think, untrue, though one of the firm is a Democrat and opposed the election of President Lincoln. But the idea of exclusion or favoritism in a matter of this kind, and in disregard of law, is absurd.

Count Adam Gurowski, a Polish exile, who has been employed as a clerk in the State Department, has published a book which I am told is unsparing in its assaults upon almost all in authority, but that he deals gently with me. He is by nature a grumbler, ardent, earnest, rash, violent, unreasonable, impracticable, with no powers of rightfully discriminating character; nor is he a correct judge of measures and results. I have neither sought nor shunned him. Under no circumstances could he be to me a pleasant companion. He wants, I think, to be frank and honest in his way, to be truthful, though given to scandal; brave he is without doubt, a rude, rough Polish bear who is courted and flattered by a set of extreme partisans that delight in

listening to his denunciations of public men, and in hearing his enthusiastic praises in broken English of liberty. He is an exile for good and bad qualities, a martyr to his opinions and his manners. Seward gave him a clerkship, — why and for what reason I never understood, for his companions and intimates are Seward's opponents, and the Count himself is and always has been an open, persistent, undisguised opponent of Seward and his course. The Count, it seems, kept a journal or took memoranda while in the Department and wrote scandal and hate in bad English, which he has printed.

The proposition to divide the State of Virginia is before Congress, and I am told it will probably be successful. I am not clear as to its expediency, and I doubt if it can constitutionally be done. Certainly the time is not auspicious for such a step. To me the division of Virginia at this time looks like a step towards a division of the Union, a general break-up. This is intuitive, an impression without investigation. Let us have no separations or divisions at present.

I have answered two resolutions, petty calls of Congress, in relation to the appointment of midshipmen. There are one hundred and forty vacancies, chiefly in consequence of the secession of the Southern States, and I have appointed sixty-two.

Senator Fessenden has been to see me in the case of George H. Preble, who is one of his constituents and a neighbor, who is dismissed for failure to do his duty on the 4th of last September, when he permitted the steamer Oreto (Florida) to run the blockade at Mobile. Senator F. thinks injustice has been done Preble, and asks that he be restored and then tried by court martial. Told him this could not be done by the Department or the President; that, being out of the service, there was but one way of restoring him, and that was by a new appointment. To be reinstated, the President must nominate and the Senate confirm. The act of confirmation would itself absolve him.

The Senate would not, however, confirm a man with guilt or wrong upon him. Fessenden said he had taken a different view; thought the President might restore without Congressional action, yet seemed confused and in doubt. Wished me to talk with Admirals Smith and Dahlgren; says the officers generally justify Preble, who, he added, is in Washington and would like to see me. I requested him to call; told F. my view of the case was unchanged, but would hear and give consideration to anything he might advance.

Preble called the next day, and we went over the case. He claims he did his whole duty; says he believed the Oreto was an English vessel, and he wished to keep the peace, was perhaps too prudent. I told him that in his zeal to preserve the peace he forgot his duty as an officer; that he had been placed as a sentinel before the harbor of Mobile, with express orders to prevent ingress or egress, and had, in not obeying these orders, failed to do his whole duty. His excuse was that if he obeyed his orders he would hurt somebody, but in not obeying he had done his country and the service great injury; that the excuse did not become an officer and would not justify a sentinel. We had much discussion on this point. He said he could have boarded and sunk the Oreto, but suppose he had done so and she had been an English vessel with an English flag above, what would have been the consequences to himself? I assured him the Government would never let an officer suffer for fidelity in obeying orders and being vigilant in performing his duty; that it would have been better for him had he not paused to consider consequences to himself, better for the country had he strictly obeyed his orders, and even if the Oreto had been an English vessel and been sunk by him, he would have been justified, and the Englishman condemned for his temerity in violating usage and disregarding the warning of the sentinel.

The subject has given me trouble, and I sent my conclusions by Assistant Secretary Fox to Fessenden. Fox,

when he saw Fessenden, did not find it convenient to state his errand, but requested the Senator to call and see me, which he did on Tuesday morning.

I informed him there was no way of instituting a court martial nor even a court of inquiry. The officers who would be required as witnesses were in the Gulf and could not be detached from indispensable duty and brought home on such an errand. That under the circumstances — the feelings of himself and others — and in justice to both Preble and the Government, I would appoint a board of officers, who should take the three reports of Commodore Preble on the 4th and 6th of September and 10th of October, — being his own statements of his case at different dates, — and say whether he had done his whole duty as he claimed and in conformity with the articles of war. That their report I would submit to the President to dispose of, and thus end the matter, so far as the Navy Department was concerned. He asked if I did not prefer the certificates of other officers. I replied no, neither statements, witnesses, nor arguments would be introduced, nothing but Preble's own reports, which I thought all he or his friends could require. F. was a little nonplussed. Said it was certainly fair, he was satisfied with such submission and presumed P. would be.

Within an hour Preble called; said that Senator F. had informed him of my proposition for an informal court, which he thought fair, but wished Admiral Farragut's letter to go to the board, as F. by his hasty letter had made an improper prejudice on me. I assured him he was mistaken, — that my action was based on his own statement. What I proposed was a board that should take his own reports and decide upon the same evidence as the Admiral and I had done, and I should abide their conclusion. The tribunal would necessarily be informal and composed of men whose opinions, if they had formed any, were unknown to me and I hoped to him also.

He said this was all he could ask or expect, but intimated

it might relieve me of responsibility if Admiral Farragut's letter was included in the submission. I said no, I evaded no honest responsibility. My convictions were that I had done right, though it had borne hard upon him; that he had been in fault from error in judgment, rather than criminal intent, but the injury was none the less, and the example was quite necessary. Without assenting to my views he said he should be satisfied with the judgment of the board and left me.

I appointed Admiral Foote, Commodore Davis, and Lieutenant-Commander Phelps and shall leave the matter in their hands.

The House has voted to create and admit Western Virginia as a State. This is not the time to divide the old Commonwealth. The requirements of the Constitution are not complied with, as they in good faith should be, by Virginia, by the proposed new State, nor by the United States. I find that Blair, with whom I exchanged a word, is opposed to it.

We have news of a movement of our troops at Falmouth with the intention of crossing the Rappahannock and attacking the Rebels.

The Rebel steamer Alabama was at Martinique and escaped the San Jacinto, Commander Ronckendorff, a good officer.

December 12, *Friday.* The board in Preble's case this day reported that he failed to do his whole duty. I went immediately and read it to the President, who gave it his approval.

Some conversation in Cabinet respecting the proposed new State of Western Virginia. The bill has not yet reached the President, who thinks the creation of this new State at this time of doubtful expediency.

December 14, *Sunday.* There has been fighting for two or three days at Fredericksburg, and our troops were said

to have crossed the river. The rumor at the War Department — and I get only rumor — is that our troops have done well, that Burnside and our generals are in good spirits; but there is something unsatisfactory, or not entirely satisfactory, in this intelligence, or in the method of communicating it. When I get nothing clear and explicit at the War Department I have my apprehensions. They fear to admit disastrous truths. Adverse tidings are suppressed, with a deal of fuss and mystery, a shuffling over of papers and maps, and a far-reaching vacant gaze at something undefined and indescribable.

Burnside is on trial. I have my fears that he has not sufficient grasp and power for the position given him, or the ability to handle so large a force; but he is patriotic, and his aims are right. It appears to me a mistake to fight the enemy in so strong a position. They have selected their own ground, and we meet them there. Halleck is General-in-Chief, but no one appears to have any confidence in his military management, or thinks him able to advise Burnside.

Just at this juncture a great force has been fitted out and sent off under Banks. It has struck me as strange that Banks was not sent up James River with a gunboat force. Such a movement would have caused a diversion on the part of the Rebels and have thrown them into some confusion, by compelling them to draw off from their strong position at Fredericksburg. But to send an army up James River, from which he has just withdrawn McClellan, against the remonstrance of that general and in opposition to the opinion of many good officers, would, in the act itself, be a confession unpleasant to Halleck. This is the aspect of things to me. A day or two will solve the problem of this generalship and military management.

Assistant Secretary Fox had yesterday an invitation to dine with Lord Lyons, and informed me before he went that he had an idea or intimation there was a wish to learn what were my views of the recent slave treaty. I told him there was no secret or ulterior purpose on my part, and

that my opinions were frankly stated in the correspondence with Seward. Returning in the evening, Fox called at my house and said that the object was as I [*sic*] had supposed. After hearing from Fox what my views were, Lord Lyons said he well understood and rightly appreciated my position, and was inclined to believe I was correct. Assured of that and that I would come into the measure, he would assent to a declaratory or supplementary clause ratifying the matter, and make the belligerent right of search and the treaty right of search compatible. I requested Fox, as they had sought to get my opinion through him, to let Lord Lyons and Secretary Seward both understand that I had no hidden purpose but only the rights of the country in view.

This whole roundabout proceeding is one of Seward's schemes — and he thinks it a very cunning one — to get his mistake rectified without acknowledging his error. Lord Lyons is no more blind to this trick than I am.

Wrote Naval Committee on Friday respecting the construction of some large steamers for cruising, and, if necessary, offensive purposes.

December 15, *Monday.* No news from Fredericksburg; and no news at this time, I fear, is not good news.

Secretary Smith called on me to unburden his mind. He dislikes Seward's management, and the general course pursued in Cabinet and between the members generally. Thinks Seward the chief cause of the unfortunate state of things.

Smith tells me he (Smith) has made up his mind to leave the Cabinet and accept the office of District Judge, which he can have.

December 16, *Tuesday.* The army has recrossed the Rappahannock; driven back, has suffered heavy loss. The shock is great, and it is difficult to get any particulars. I fear the plan was not a wise one.

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December 19, *Friday*. Soon after reaching the Department this A.M., I received a note from Nicolay, the President's secretary, requesting me to attend a special Cabinet-meeting at half-past ten. All the members were punctually there except Seward.

The President desired that what he had to communicate should not be the subject of conversation elsewhere, and proceeded to inform us that on Wednesday evening, about six o'clock, Senator Preston King and F. W. Seward came into his room, each bearing a communication. That which Mr. King presented was the resignation of the Secretary of State, and Mr. F. W. Seward handed in his own. Mr. King then informed the President that at a Republican caucus held that day a pointed and positive opposition had shown itself against the Secretary of State, which terminated in a unanimous expression, with one exception, against him and a wish for his removal. The feeling finally shaped itself into resolutions of a general character, and the appointment of a committee of nine to bear them to the President, and to communicate to him the sentiments of the Republican Senators. Mr. King, the former colleague and the personal friend of Mr. Seward, being also from the same State, felt it to be a duty to inform the Secretary at once of what had occurred. On receiving this information, which was wholly a surprise, Mr. Seward immediately wrote, and by Mr. King tendered his resignation. Mr. King suggested it would be well for the committee to wait upon the President at an early moment, and, the Secretary agreeing with him, Mr. King on Wednesday morning notified Judge Collamer, the chairman, who sent word to the President that they would call at the Executive Mansion at any hour after six that evening, and the President sent word he would receive them at seven.

The committee came at the time specified, and the President says the evening was spent in a pretty free and animated conversation. No opposition was manifested towards any other member of the Cabinet than Mr.

Seward. Some not very friendly feelings were shown towards one or two others, but no wish that any one should leave but the Secretary of State. Him they charged, if not with infidelity, with indifference, with want of earnestness in the War, with want of sympathy with the country in this great struggle, and with many things objectionable, and especially with a too great ascendency and control of the President and measures of administration. This, he said, was the point and pith of their complaint.

The President says that in reply to the committee he stated how this movement had shocked and grieved him; that the Cabinet he had selected in view of impending difficulties and of all the responsibilities upon himself; that he and the members had gone on harmoniously, whatever had been their previous party feelings and associations; that there had never been serious disagreements, though there had been differences; that in the overwhelming troubles of the country, which had borne heavily upon him, he had been sustained and consoled by the good feeling and the mutual and unselfish confidence and zeal that pervaded the Cabinet.

He expressed a hope that there would be no combined movement on the part of other members of the Cabinet to resist this assault, whatever might be the termination. Said this movement was uncalled for, that there was no such charge, admitting all that was said, as should break up or overthrow a Cabinet, nor was it possible for him to go on with a total abandonment of old friends.

Mr. Bates stated the difference between our system and that of England, where a change of ministry involved a new election, dissolution of Parliament, etc. Three or four of the members of the Cabinet said they had heard of the resignation: Blair the day preceding; Stanton through the President, on whom he had made a business call; Mr. Bates when coming to the meeting.

The President requested that we should, with him, meet

the committee. This did not receive the approval of Mr. Chase, who said he had no knowledge whatever of the movement, or the resignation, until since he had entered the room. Mr. Bates knew of no good that would come of an interview. I stated that I could see no harm in it, and if the President wished it, I thought it a duty for us to attend. The proceeding was of an extraordinary character. Mr. Blair thought it would be well for us to be present, and finally all acquiesced. The President named half-past seven this evening.

December 20, *Saturday*. At the meeting last evening there were present of the committee Senators Collamer, Fessenden, Harris, Trumbull, Grimes, Howard, Sumner, and Pomeroy. Wade was absent. The President and all the Cabinet but Seward were present. The subject was opened by the President, who read the resolutions and stated the substance of his interviews with the committee, — their object and purpose. He spoke of the unity of his Cabinet, and how, though they could not be expected to think and speak alike on all subjects, all had acquiesced in measures when once decided. The necessities of the times, he said, had prevented frequent and long sessions of the Cabinet, and the submission of every question at the meetings.

Secretary Chase indorsed the President's statement fully and entirely, but regretted that there was not a more full and thorough consideration and canvass of every important measure in open Cabinet.

Senator Collamer, the chairman of the committee, succeeded the President and calmly and fairly presented the views of the committee and of those whom they represented. They wanted united counsels, combined wisdom, and energetic action. If there is truth in the maxim that in a multitude of counselors there is safety, it might be well that those advisers who were near the President and selected by him, and all of whom were more or less responsible, should be consulted on the great questions which

affected the national welfare, and that the ear of the Executive should be open to all and that he should have the minds of all.

Senator Fessenden was skillful but a little tart; felt, it could be seen, more than he cared to say; wanted the whole Cabinet to consider and decide great questions, and that no one in particular should absorb and direct the whole Executive action. Spoke of a remark which he had heard from J. Q. Adams on the floor of Congress in regard to a measure of his administration. Mr. Adams said the measure was adopted against his wishes and opinion, but he was outvoted by Mr. Clay and others. He wished an administration so conducted.

Grimes, Sumner, and Trumbull were pointed, emphatic, and unequivocal in their opposition to Mr. Seward, whose zeal and sincerity in this conflict they doubted; each was unrelenting and unforgiving.

Blair spoke earnestly and well. Sustained the President, and dissented most decidedly from the idea of a plural Executive; claimed that the President was accountable for his administration, might ask opinions or not of either and as many as he pleased, of all or none, of his Cabinet. Mr. Bates took much the same view.

The President managed his own case, speaking freely, and showed great tact, shrewdness, and ability, provided such a subject were a proper one for such a meeting and discussion. I have no doubt he considered it most judicious to conciliate the Senators with respectful deference, whatever may have been his opinion of their interference. When he closed his remarks, he said it would be a gratification to him if each member of the committee would state whether he now thought it advisable to dismiss Mr. Seward, and whether his exclusion would strengthen or weaken the Administration and the Union cause in their respective States. Grimes, Trumbull, and Sumner, who had expressed themselves decidedly against the continuance of Mr. Seward in the Cabinet, indicated no change of

opinion. Collamer and Fessenden declined committing themselves on the subject; had in their action the welfare of the whole country in view; were not prepared to answer the questions. Senator Harris felt it a duty to say that while many of the friends of the Administration would be gratified, others would feel deeply wounded, and the effect of Mr. Seward's retirement would, on the whole, be calamitous in the State of New York. Pomeroy of Kansas said, personally, he believed the withdrawal of Mr. Seward would be a good movement and he sincerely wished it might take place. Howard of Michigan declined answering the question.

During the discussion, the volume of diplomatic correspondence, recently published, was alluded to; some letters denounced as unwise and impolitic were specified, one of which, a confidential dispatch to Mr. Adams, was read. If it was unwise to write, it was certainly injudicious and indiscreet to publish such a document. Mr. Seward has genius and talent,—no one better knows it than himself,— but for one in his place he is often wanting in careful discrimination, true wisdom, sound judgment, and discreet statesmanship. The committee believe he thinks more of the glorification of Seward than the welfare of the country. He wishes the glorification of both, and believes he is the man to accomplish it, but has unwittingly and unwarily begotten and brought upon himself a vast amount of distrust and hostility on the part of Senators, by his endeavors to impress them and others with the belief that he is the Administration. It is a mistake; the Senators dislike it,— have measured and know him.

It was nearly midnight when we left the President; and it could not be otherwise than that all my wakeful moments should be absorbed with a subject which, time and circumstances considered, was of grave importance to the Administration and the country. A Senatorial combination to dictate to the President in regard to his political family in the height of a civil war which threatens the

existence of the Republic cannot be permitted to succeed, even if the person to whom they object were as obnoxious as they represent; but Seward's foibles are not serious failings. After fully canvassing the subject in all its phases, my mind was clear as to the course which it was my duty to pursue, and what I believed was the President's duty also.

My first movement this morning was to call on the President as soon as I supposed he could have breakfasted. Governor Robertson of Kentucky was with him when I went in, but soon left. I informed the President I had pondered the events of yesterday and last evening, and felt it incumbent on me to advise him not to accept the resignation of Mr. Seward; that if there were objections, real or imaginary, against Mr. Seward, the time, manner, and circumstances — the occasion, and the method of presenting what the Senators considered objections — were all inappropriate and wrong; that no party or faction should be permitted to dictate to the President in regard to his Cabinet; that it would be of evil example and fraught with incalculable injury to the Government and country; that neither the legislative department, nor the Senate branch of it, should be allowed to encroach on the Executive prerogatives and rights; that it devolved on him — and was his duty to assert and maintain the rights and independence of the Executive; that he ought not, against his own convictions, to yield one iota of the authority intrusted to him on the demand of either branch of Congress or of both combined, or to any party, whatever might be its views and intentions; that Mr. Seward had his infirmities and errors, but they were venial; that he and I differed on many things, as did other members of the Cabinet; that he was sometimes disposed to step beyond his own legitimate bounds and not duly respect the rights of his associates, but these were matters that did not call for Senatorial interference. In short, I considered it for the true interest of the country, now as in the future, that

this scheme should be defeated; that, so believing, I had at the earliest moment given him my conclusions.

The President was much gratified; said the whole thing had struck him as it had me, and if carried out as the Senators prescribed, the whole Government must cave in. It could not stand, could not hold water; the bottom would be out.

I added that, having expressed my wish that he would not accept Mr. Seward's resignation, I thought it important that Seward should not press its acceptance, nor did I suppose he would. In this he also concurred, and asked if I had seen Seward. I replied I had not, my first duty was with him, and, having ascertained that we agreed, I would now go over and see him. He earnestly desired me to do so.

I went immediately to Seward's house. Stanton was with him. Seward was excited, talking vehemently to Stanton of the course pursued and the results that must follow if the scheme succeeded; told Stanton he (Stanton) would be the next victim, that there was a call for a meeting at the Cooper Institute this evening. Stanton said he had seen it; I had not. Seward got the *Herald*, got me to read; but Stanton seized the paper, as Seward and myself entered into conversation, and he related what the President had already communicated, — how Preston King had come to him, he wrote his resignation at once, and so did Fred, etc., etc. In the mean time Stanton rose, and remarked he had much to do, and, as Governor S. had been over this matter with him, he would leave.

I then stated my interview with the President, my advice that the President must not accept, nor he press, his resignation. Seward was greatly pleased with my views; said he had but one course before him when the doings of the Senators were communicated, but that if the President and country required of him any duty in this emergency he did not feel at liberty to refuse it. He spoke of his long political experience; dwelt on his own sagacity and his great services; feels deeply this movement, which was

wholly unexpected; tries to suppress any exhibition of personal grievance or disappointment, but is painfully wounded, mortified, and chagrined. I told him I should return and report to the President our interview and that he acquiesced in my suggestions. He said he had no objections, but he thought the subject should be disposed of one way or the other at once. He is disappointed, I see, that the President did not promptly refuse to consider his resignation, and dismiss, or refuse to parley with, the committee.

When I returned to the White House, Chase and Stanton were in the President's office, but he was absent. A few words were interchanged on the great topic in hand. I was very emphatic in my opposition to the acceptance of Seward's resignation. Neither gave me a direct answer nor did either express an opinion on the subject, though I think both wished to be understood as acquiescing.

When the President came in, which was in a few moments, his first address was to me, asking if I "had seen the man." I replied that I had, and that he assented to my views. He then turned to Chase and said, "I sent for you, for this matter is giving me great trouble." At our first interview this morning the President rang and directed that a message be sent to Mr. Chase. Chase said he had been painfully affected by the meeting last evening, which was a total surprise to him, and, after some not very explicit remarks as to how he was affected, informed the President he had prepared his resignation of the office of Secretary of the Treasury. "Where is it?" said the President quickly, his eye lighting up in a moment. "I brought it with me," said Chase, taking the paper from his pocket; "I wrote it this morning." "Let me have it," said the President, reaching his long arm and fingers towards C., who held on, seemingly reluctant to part with the letter, which was sealed, and which he apparently hesitated to surrender. Something further he wished to say, but the President was eager and did not perceive it, but took and hastily opened the letter.

"This," said he, looking towards me with a triumphal laugh, "cuts the Gordian knot." An air of satisfaction spread over his countenance such as I have not seen for some time. "I can dispose of this subject now without difficulty," he added, as he turned on his chair; "I see my way clear."

Chase sat by Stanton, fronting the fire; the President beside the fire, his face towards them, Stanton nearest him. I was on the sofa near the east window. While the President was reading the note, which was brief, Chase turned round and looked towards me, a little perplexed. He would, I think, have been better satisfied could this interview with the President have been without the presence of others, or at least if I was away. The President was so delighted that he saw not how others were affected.

"Mr. President," said Stanton, with solemnity, "I informed you day before yesterday that I was ready to tender you my resignation. I wish you, sir, to consider my resignation at this time in your possession."

"You may go to your Department," said the President; "I don't want yours. This," holding out Chase's letter, "is all I want; this relieves me; my way is clear; the trouble is ended. I will detain neither of you longer." We all rose to leave, but Stanton lingered and held back as we reached the door. Chase and myself came downstairs together. He was moody and taciturn. Some one stopped him on the lower stairs and I passed on, but C. was not a minute behind me, and before I reached the Department, Stanton came staving along.

Preston King called at my house this evening and gave me particulars of what had been said and done at the caucuses of the Republican Senators, — of the surprise he felt when he found the hostility so universal against Seward, and that some of the calmest and most considerate Senators were the most decided; stated the course pursued by himself, which was frank, friendly, and manly. He was greatly pleased with my course, of which he had been

informed by Seward and the President in part; and I gave him some facts which they did not. Blair tells me that his father's views correspond with mine, and the approval of F. P. Blair and Preston King gives me assurance that I am right.

Montgomery Blair is confident that Stanton has been instrumental in getting up this movement against Seward to screen himself, and turn attention from the management of the War Department. There may be something in this surmise of Blair; but I am inclined to think that Chase, Stanton, and Caleb Smith have each, but without concert, participated, if not directly, by expressions of discontent to their Senatorial intimates. Chase and Smith, I know, are a good deal dissatisfied with Seward and have not hesitated to make known their feelings in some quarters, though, I apprehend, not to the President. With Stanton I have little intimacy. He came into the Cabinet under Seward's wing, and he knows it, but Stanton is, by nature, an intriguer, courts favor, is not faithful in his friendships, is given to secret, underhand combinations. His obligations to Seward are great, but would not deter him from raising a breeze against Seward to favor himself. Chase and Seward entered the Cabinet as rivals, and in cold courtesy have so continued. There was an effort by Seward's friends to exclude Chase from the Treasury; the President did not yield to it, but it is obvious that Seward's more pleasant nature and consummate skill have enabled him to get to windward of Chase in administrative management, and the latter, who has but little tact, feels it. Transactions take place of a general character, not unfrequently, of which Chase and others are not advised until they are made public. Often the fact reaches them through the papers. Seward has not exhibited shrewdness in this, [though] it may have afforded him a temporary triumph as regarded Chase, and he doubtless flatters himself that it strengthens a belief which he desires should prevail that he is the "power behind the throne greater than

the throne itself," that he is the real Executive. The result of all this has been the alienation of a portion of his old friends without getting new ones, and finally this appointment of a committee which asked his removal. The objections urged are, I notice, the points on which Chase is most sensitive.

For two or three months Stanton has evinced a growing indifference to Seward, with whom he was, at first, intimate and to whom he was much devoted. I have observed that, as he became alienated towards Seward, his friendship for Chase increased.

My differences with Seward I have endeavored to settle with him in the day and time of their occurrences. They have not been many, but they have been troublesome and annoying because they were meddlesome and disturbing. He gets behind me, tampers with my subordinates, and interferes injuriously and ignorantly in naval matters, not so much from wrong purposes, but as a busybody by nature. I have not made these matters subjects of complaint outside and think it partly the result of usage and practice at Albany.

I am also aware that he and his friend Thurlow Weed were almost as much opposed to my entering the Cabinet as they were to Chase. They wanted a fraternity of Seward men. The President discerned this and put it aside. But he has not so readily detected, nor been aware of the influence which Seward exercises over him, often unfortunately. In his intercourse with his colleagues, save the rivalry between himself and Chase and the supercilious self-assumption which he sometimes displays, he has been courteous, affable, and, I think, anxious to preserve harmony in the Cabinet. I have seen no effort to get up combinations for himself personally, or against others. He supposed himself immensely popular at the moment when friends were estranged, and was as surprised as myself when he learned the Senatorial movement for his overthrow.

December 23, *Tuesday*. It was announced yesterday morning that the President had requested Mr. Seward and Mr. Chase to withdraw their resignations and resume their duties. This took the public by surprise. Chase's resignation was scarcely known, and his friends, particularly those in the late movement, were a little disgusted when they found that he and Seward were in the same category.

Seward's influence has often been anything but salutary. Not that he was evil inclined, but he is meddlesome, fussy, has no fixed principles or policy. Chase has chafed under Seward's management, yet has tried to conceal any exhibition of irritated feelings. Seward, assuming to be helmsman, has, while affecting and believing in his own superiority, tried to be patronizing to all, especially soothing and conciliating to Chase, who sees and is annoyed by it. The President feels that he is under obligations to each, and that both are serviceable. He is friendly to both. He is fond of Seward, who is affable; he respects Chase, who is clumsy. Seward comforts him; Chase he deems a necessity.

On important questions, Blair is as potent with the President as either, and sometimes I think equal to both. With some egotism, Blair has great good sense, a better knowledge and estimate of military men than either or both the others, and, I think, is possessed of more solid, reliable administrative ability.

All the members were at the Cabinet-meeting to-day. Seward was feeling very happy. Chase was pale; said he was ill, had been for weeks. The subject principally discussed was the proposed division of Virginia and the creation of a new State to be called Western Virginia. Chase is strongly for it; Blair and Bates against it, the latter, however, declining to discuss it or give his reasons except in writing. Stanton is with Chase. Seward does not show his hand. My impressions are, under the existing state of things, decidedly adverse. It is a disturbance that might be avoided at this time and has constitutional difficulties.

We have news that General Foster has possession of Goldsborough, North Carolina.

December 24, *Wednesday*. Congress has adjourned over until the 5th of January. It is as well, perhaps, though I should not have advised it. But the few real business men, of honest intentions, will dispatch matters about as well and fast without as with them. The demagogues in Congress disgrace the body and the country. Noisy and loud professions, with no useful policy or end, exhibit themselves daily.

Most of the Members will go home. Dixon says the feeling North is strong and emphatic against Stanton, and that the intrigue against Seward was to cover and shield Stanton. Others say the same. Doolittle, though less full and explicit, has this opinion. Fox tells me that Grimes declares his object was an onslaught on Stanton. If so, it was a strange method. Grimes went over the whole debate in caucus with F.; said he believed opposition manifested itself in some degree towards every member of the Cabinet but myself; that towards one or two only slight exhibitions of dislike appeared, and most were well sustained. All who spoke were complimentary of me and the naval management, but Hale, while he uttered no complaint, was greatly annoyed with the compliments of myself and the quiet but efficient conduct of the Navy.

December 26, *Friday*. Some talk in Cabinet of Thayer's scheme of emigration to Florida.[1]

Blair read his opinion of the proposition for making a new State of Western Virginia. His views correspond with mine, but are abler and more elaborately stated. Mr. Bates read a portion of his opinion on the constitutional

[1] This was a proposal to colonize Florida with loyal citizens from the North. Its author was Eli Thayer, whose Emigrant Aid Company had been largely instrumental in making Kansas a Free State. He afterwards advocated it in a public speech at the Cooper Institute, New York, February 7, 1863.

point, which appeared to me decisive and conclusive. The President has called for opinions from each of his Cabinet. I had the first rough draft of mine in my pocket, though not entirely copied. Chase said his was completed, but he had not brought it with him. Seward said he was wholly unprepared. Stanton assured the President he would be ready with his in season. The President said it would answer his purpose if the opinions of each were handed in on or before Tuesday.

December 29, *Monday.* We had yesterday a telegram that the British pirate craft Alabama captured the Ariel, one of the Aspinwall steamers, on her passage from New York to Aspinwall, off the coast of Cuba. Abuse of the Navy Department will follow. It will give the mercenaries who are prostituted correspondents, and who have not been permitted to plunder the Government by fraudulent contracts, an opportunity to wreak vengeance for their disappointments.

I am exceedingly glad it was an outward and not a homeward bound vessel. It is annoying when we want all our force on blockade duty to be compelled to detach so many of our best craft on the fruitless errand of searching the wide ocean for this wolf from Liverpool. We shall, however, have a day of reckoning with Great Britain for these wrongs, and I sometimes think I care not how soon nor in what manner that reckoning comes.

A committee has been appointed by the Legislature of Connecticut, of eight persons, to visit Washington and urge the selection of New London for a navy yard. Twelve hundred dollars are appropriated to defray their expenses. There has been no examination by the Legislature of the question, or investigation of the comparative merits of this and other places, or whether an additional yard is needed, or what the real interest of the country requires; but there is, with excusable local pride, a speculating job by a few individuals and a general idea that a government

establishment for the expenditure of money will benefit the locality, which controls the movement. As I am a citizen of Connecticut, there is a hope that I may be persuaded by personal considerations to debase myself, — forget my duty and make this selection for that locality regardless of the wants or true interests of the country. I have proposed to transfer the limited and circumscribed yard at Philadelphia to League Island, where there is an abundance of room, fresh water, and other extraordinary advantages. We do not want more yards, certainly not east of the Hudson. We do need a government establishment of a different character from any we now have, for the construction, repair, and preservation of iron vessels. League Island on the Delaware combines all these required advantages, is far in the interior, remote from assault in war, and is in the vicinity of iron and coal, is away from the sea, etc., etc. New London has none of these advantages, but is located in my native State. My friends and my father's friends are there, and I am urged to forget my country and favor that place. A navy yard is for no one State, but this the Legislature and its committee and thousands of their constituents do not take into consideration; but I must.

The six members of the Cabinet (Smith absent) to-day handed in their respective opinions on the question of dividing the old Commonwealth of Virginia and carving out and admitting a new State. As Stanton and myself returned from the Cabinet-meeting to the Departments, he expressed surprise that I should oppose division, for he thought it politic and wise to plant a Free State south of the Ohio. I thought our duties were constitutional, not experimental, that we should observe and preserve the landmarks, and that mere expediency should not override constitutional obligations. This action was not predicated on the consent of the people of Virginia, legitimately expressed; was arbitrary and without proper authority; was such a departure from, and an undermining of, our system that I could not approve it and feared it was the beginning

of the end. As regarded a Free State south of the Ohio, I told him the probabilities were that pretty much all of them would be free by Tuesday when the Proclamation emancipating slaves would be published. The Rebels had appealed to arms in vindication of slavery, were using slaves to carry on the War, and they must be content with the results of that issue; the arbitrament of arms to which they had appealed would be against them. This measure, I thought, we were justified in adopting on the issue presented and as a military necessity, but the breaking up of a State by the General Government without the prescribed forms, innate rights, and the consent of the people fairly and honestly expressed, was arbitrary and wrong. Stanton attempted no defense.

At the meeting to-day, the President read the draft of his Emancipation Proclamation, invited criticism, and finally directed that copies should be furnished to each. It is a good and well-prepared paper, but I suggested that a part of the sentence marked in pencil be omitted.[1] Chase advised that fractional parts of States ought not to be exempted. In this I think he is right, and so stated. Practically there would be difficulty in freeing parts of States, and not freeing others, — a clashing between central and local authorities.

There is discontent in the public mind. The management of our public affairs is not satisfactory. Our army operations have been a succession of disappointments. General Halleck has accomplished nothing, and has not the public confidence. General McClellan has intelligence but not decision; operated understandingly but was never prepared. With General Halleck there seems neither military capacity nor decision. I have not heard nor seen a clear and satisfactory proposition or movement on his part yet.

Information reaches us that General Butler has been superseded at New Orleans by General Banks. The wis-

[1] Just what this suggestion referred to does not appear.

dom of this change I question, and so told the President, who called on me one day last week and discussed matters generally. I have not a very exalted opinion of the military qualities of either. Butler has shown ability as a police magistrate both at Baltimore and New Orleans, and in each, but particularly at the latter place, has had a peculiar community to govern. The Navy captured the place and turned it over to his keeping. The President agreed with me that Butler had shown skill in discharging his civil duties, and said he had in view for Butler the command of the valley movement in the Mississippi. Likely he has this in view, but whether Halleck will acquiesce is more questionable. I have reason to believe that Seward has effected this change, and that he has been prompted by the foreigners to do it. Outside the State and War Departments, I apprehend no one was consulted. I certainly was not, and therefore could not apprize any of our naval officers, who are coöperating with the army and by courtesy and right should have been informed. Banks has some ready qualities for civil administration and, if not employed in the field or active military operations, will be likely to acquit himself respectably as a provisional or military governor. He has not the energy, power, ability of Butler, nor, though of loose and fluctuating principles, will he be so reckless and unscrupulous. The officer in command in that quarter must necessarily hold a taut rein.

December 31, *Wednesday.* We had an early and special Cabinet-meeting, convened at 10 A.M. The subject was the Proclamation of to-morrow to emancipate the slaves in the Rebel States. Seward proposed two amendments, —one including mine, and one enjoining upon, instead of appealing to, those emancipated, to forbear from tumult. Blair had, like Seward and myself, proposed the omission of a part of a sentence and made other suggestions which I thought improvements. Chase made some good criticisms and proposed a felicitous closing sentence. The President

took the suggestions, written in order, and said he would complete the document.

I met General Burnside on the portico of the White House this A.M. He was about entering his carriage, but waited my coming. Says he is here a witness in Fitz John Porter's case.

The year closes less favorably than I had hoped and expected, yet some progress has been made. It is not to be denied, however, that the national ailment seems more chronic. The disease is deep-seated. Energetic measures are necessary, and I hope we may have them. None of us appear to do enough, and yet I am surprised that we have done so much. We have had some misfortunes, and a lurking malevolence exists towards us among nations, that could not have been anticipated. Worse than this, the envenomed, relentless, and unpatriotic spirit of party paralyzes and weakens the hand of the Government and country.

VI

The Emancipation Proclamation — The Battle of Murfreesborough — Loss of the Monitor — Criticisms of the Navy Department — Halleck's Deficiencies — The Employment of the Contrabands — John Covode's Gubernatorial Aspirations — The Pernicious Party Spirit — McClernand and Vicksburg — The Court Martial on Fitz John Porter — The New London Navy Yard Question — Confederate Letters — Fitz John Porter's Conviction — A Call from F. A. Conkling — The Gauge of the Pacific Railroad — Hooker placed in command of the Army of the Potomac — An Estimate of Farragut — "Weed is Seward, and Seward is Weed" — Governor Morgan elected Senator from New York — Reported Pressure for Mediation on the Part of the French Government — Proposed Attack on Charleston — Chase's Bank Bill — The Senate rejects the Reappointment of Collector Howard — Irregular Acts of the President — Scene between Scott, McClellan, and Seward.

January 1, 1863, *Thursday.* The New Year opens with a bright and brilliant day. Exchanged congratulations at the Executive Mansion with the President and colleagues, at eleven this morning. The usual formalities. Officers of the Army and Navy came in at half-past eleven. I left before twelve.

The Emancipation Proclamation is published in this evening's *Star.* This is a broad step, and will be a landmark in history. The immediate effect will not be all its friends anticipate or its opponents apprehend. Passing events are steadily accomplishing what is here proclaimed.

The character of the country is in many respects undergoing a transformation. This must be obvious to all, and I am content to await the results of passing events, deep as they may plough their furrows in our once happy land. This great upheaval which is shaking our civil fabric was perhaps necessary to overthrow and subdue the mass of wrong and error which no trivial measure could eradicate. The seed which is being sown will germinate and bear

fruit, and tares and weeds will also spring up under the new dispensation.

Blair mentioned at my house a few evenings since that General McClellan assumed command of the Army of the Potomac last September without orders; that, finding military affairs in a disordered and confused condition, he sought an interview with the President, Stanton, and Halleck respectively, and also called to see him (Blair), but he was absent; that he then called his staff and left, but met me, to whom alone he communicated whither he was going and his purpose. This, Blair tells me, is the statement made by McClellan to Governor Dennison, who has been stopping with Blair. I well remember meeting him at that time, but my understanding has been that McC. received command of the Army by order of the President on recommendation of Halleck.

January 3, *Saturday*. We have, yesterday and to-day, broken accounts of a great fight for three days — and not yet terminated — at Murfreesborough, Tennessee. All statements say we have the best, that we *shall* beat the Rebels, that we have pierced their centre, that we are driving them through M., etc. I hope to hear we *have* done instead of we "shall" do. None of our army fights have been finished, but are drawn battles, — worrying, exhausting, but never completed. Of Rosecrans I have thought better and hope a good account of his work, but the best sometimes fail, and he may not be best.

A word by telegraph that the Monitor has foundered and over twenty of her crew, including some officers, are lost. The fate of this vessel affects me in other respects. She is a primary representative of a class identified with my administration of the Navy. Her novel construction and qualities I adopted and she was built amidst obloquy and ridicule. Such a change in the character of a fighting vessel few naval men, or any Secretary under their influence, would have taken the responsibility of adopting. But

Admiral Smith and finally all the Board which I appointed seconded my views, and were willing, Davis somewhat reluctantly, to recommend the experiment if I would assume the risk and responsibility. Her success with the Merrimac directly after she went into commission relieved me of odium and anxiety, and men who were preparing to ridicule were left to admire.

When Bushnell of New Haven brought me the first model and plan, I was favorably impressed. I was then in Hartford, proposing to remove my family, but sent him at once to Washington, following myself within a day or two. Understanding that Ericsson, the inventor, was sensitive in consequence of supposed slight and neglect by the Navy Department or this Government some years ago, I made it a point to speak to Admiral Smith, Chairman of the Board, and specially request that he should be treated tenderly, and opportunity given him for full and deliberate hearing. I found Admiral Smith well disposed. The plan was adopted, and the test of her fighting and resisting power was by an arrangement between Admiral Smith and myself, without communication with any other, that she should, when completed, go at once up Elizabeth River to Norfolk Navy Yard, and destroy the Merrimac while in the dry dock, and the dock itself. Had she been completed within the contract time, one hundred days, this purpose would have been accomplished, but there was delay and disappointment, and her prowess was exhibited in a conflict with her huge antagonist under much more formidable circumstances. Her career since the time she first entered Hampton Roads is public history, but her origin, and everything in relation to her, from the inception, have been since her success designedly misrepresented.

Admiral Smith beyond any other person is deserving of credit, if credit be due any one connected with the Navy Department for this vessel. Had she been a failure, he, more than any one but the Secretary, would have been blamed, and [he] was fully aware that he would have to

share with me the odium and the responsibility. Let him, therefore, have the credit which is justly his.

January 5, *Monday.* Commander Bankhead arrived this morning and brings particulars of the loss of the Monitor. Its weakness was in herself, where we had apprehended, and not in an antagonist. This has been in some degree remedied in the new boats we are now constructing.

For months I have been berated and abused because I had not more vessels of the Monitor class under contract. Her success with the Merrimac when she was under the trial as an experiment made men wild, and they censured me for not having built a fleet when she was constructed. Now that she is lost, the same persons will be likely to assail me for expending money on such a craft.

There is a set of factious fools who think it is wise to be censorious, and it is almost as amusing as it is vexatious to hear and read the remarks of these Solomons. One or two of these officious blockheads make themselves conspicuous in the New York Chamber of Commerce, and none more so than Mr. Charles H. Marshall, who attempts to show off his nautical knowledge by constantly attacking and slandering the Secretary of the Navy. Marshall was formerly a shipmaster and it was his often expressed opinion that no man should be Secretary of the Navy who has not had command of, and the sailing of, a ship. Like many others as simple if not as egotistical, he would have the Secretary who administers the department a sailor and for the same reasons he should be an engineer, naval constructor, etc. On every occasion of disaster, no matter from what cause, this man Marshall imputes it to the fact that the Secretary of the Navy has never commanded a ship, and he never admits that any credit is due the Navy Department for intelligent and correct administration, or the Secretary of the Navy for any success of any kind, whether of a squadron or single ship, because he is not and

never was a sea-captain. Marshall has had his prejudices sharpened by others and particularly by Moses H. Grinnell, who thinks a shipping merchant would make a good Secretary of the Navy. Both are disappointed men, and each wants to be at the head of the Navy Department.

Thus far the British pirate named Alabama sailing under Rebel colors has escaped capture. As a consequence there are marvelous accounts of her wonderful speed, and equally marvelous ones of the want of speed of our cruisers. Of course there is no controverting these fables; she will be a myth, a "skimmer of the seas," till taken, and our own vessels, of better speed and power, will be slandered by the Marshalls and Grinnells as destitute of all speed. There are men of better sense in the Chamber of Commerce, but one of these has been an extensive shipowner, the other a shipmaster; both are good and well-meaning men, have been successful business men, but are egotistical and vainly weak. Neither is competent to administer the Navy Department.

The loss of the Monitor and the report of Admiral Lee and others of the draft of water at the inlet is unfavorable for a naval attack on the battery at Cape Fear, and the army object to move on Wilmington except in conjunction with the Navy. It is best, therefore, to push on to Charleston and strengthen Du Pont. The War Department promised to send forward to South Carolina an additional military force of ten thousand under General Hunter. Halleck is heavy-headed; wants sagacity, readiness, courage, and heart. I am not an admirer of the man. He may have some talent as a writer and critic; in all military matters he seems destitute of resources, skill, or capacity. He is more tardy and irresolute than McClellan and is deficient in the higher qualities which the latter possessed.

We have further cheering news from Tennessee of the success of Rosecrans at Murfreesborough; also hopeful news from Vicksburg. I do not see that the least credit is

due to Halleck in either of these cases, unless for not embarrassing the officers in command.

It was arranged and directed by the President that General McClernand should command the forces which were to coöperate with the Navy at the opening of the navigation of the Mississippi and the capture of Vicksburg. But McClernand has scarcely been heard of. He is not of the Regular Army, and is no favorite, I perceive, with Halleck, though the President entertains a good opinion of him. Blair alluded two or three weeks since to the fact that McClernand was crowded aside; said there was a combination to prevent his having that command. The President started from his chair when the remark was made and said it should not be so. Stanton declared it was not so, that he and Halleck had arranged the matter that day. The President looked surprised and said he supposed it had been done long ago.

January 6, *Tuesday.* Got off dispatches this morning ordering the ironclads south to strengthen Du Pont in his attack on Charleston, which he intends to take, — then Savannah, if not too long delayed, when the ironclads must go around to Pensacola.

Wilkes is not doing as much as we expected. I fear he has more zeal for and finds it more profitable to capture blockade-runners than to hunt for the Alabama. Lord Lyons is preferring complaints against him for want of courtesy, when he is really flinging on him British insults. There is not much love lost between him and John Bull. If Seward would square up firmly we could make Bull behave better.

January 8, *Thursday.* Had a singular letter to-day from Chase, requesting that vessels with custom-house clearance might be allowed to pass the blockade. The arrangement is in accordance with an understanding which he has with the Secretary of War. Replied that I was prepared to give

no such instructions until the blockade was raised or modified.

January 9, *Friday.* On my way to Cabinet-meeting this A.M. met Covode and Judge Lewis of Pennsylvania. The two had just left the President and presented me with a card from him to the effect that Covode had investigated the case of Chambers, Navy Agent at Philadelphia, and that if I saw no objection he should be removed. Told them I was going to the President and the subject should have attention. When I mentioned the subject, the President wished me to look into the case and see that all was right. He had not, he said, examined it, but passed it over to me, who he knew would.

The final accounts of the result at Murfreesborough are favorable. Rosecrans has done himself honor and the country service. From Vicksburg the intelligence is less satisfactory. There appears to have been good fighting but without results. A desperate stand will be made by the Rebels to hold this place. It is important to them to prevent the free navigation of the Mississippi; it is as important to us that it should be unobstructed. They wish to have communication with Texas; we want to cut it off. Had the army seconded Farragut and the Navy months ago, Vicksburg would have been in our possession. Halleck was good for nothing then, nor is he now.

January 10, *Saturday.* The President sent for Stanton and myself; wished us to consult and do what we could for the employment of the contrabands, and as the Rebels threatened to kill all caught with arms in their hands, to employ them where they would not be liable to be captured. On the ships he thought they were well cared for, and suggested to Stanton that they could perform garrison duty at Memphis, Columbus, and other places and let the soldiers go on more active service.

Covode called at my house this evening and wanted the

President's card. Said he was likely to get into difficulty and wished his name not to be used in the matter of removing the Navy Agent which he had urged. Would himself see Chambers and advise him what to do. He expects, he says, to be candidate for Governor of Pennsylvania. Covode is shrewd but illiterate, a match and more than a match for men of higher culture, reputation, and acquirements; but I hardly think his gubernatorial expectations will be realized, though they sometimes take strange material for Governor in Pennsylvania.

. . . . . .

The great problem which is being solved in these days seems to be scarcely realized by our public, and really great, men. It is sad to witness in this period of calamity, when the nation is struggling for existence, and the cause of good government and civil liberty is at stake, the spirit of party overpowering patriotism. The Governors in several of the States have presented their messages during the week. Tod of Ohio exhibits a manly, wholesome, and vigorous tone, others also do well, but the jesuitical and heartless insincerity of Seymour of New York is devoid of true patriotism, weak in statesmanship, and a discredit to the position he occupies. Unhallowed partisan and personal aspirations are moving springs with him. That such a man, at such a time, should have been elected to such a place does no credit to popular intelligence or to public virtue. When Seward, himself, I think, rightly disposed, acquiesced in the debased partisanship of his friend Weed, who in spite wanted Wadsworth, the gallant and patriotic citizen, defeated, he committed a fatal error.

In the insurgent States patriotism seems extinguished, the flag and country are hated. There is great suffering on the part of the people from all the direful calamities which war can bring, yet there is no evidence of returning sense or affection for that union which conferred upon them happiness and prosperity. Greater calamities, greater suffering, must be endured.

Some things have taken place which will undoubtedly for a time exasperate the Southern mind, for they will affect Southern society, habits, labor, and pursuits. For a period emancipation will aggravate existing differences, and a full generation will be necessary to effect and complete the change which has been commenced.

January 12, *Monday.* Accounts from Vicksburg are unfavorable and vague. I fear there has been mismanagement, but we must wait official reports. It is said that Sherman has been superseded by McClernand. I know not how this is. At the commencement of this campaign, as early as last September, it was understood that McClernand was to have command of the army which was to go down the river and coöperate with our naval commander, Porter. The President had confidence in him, and designated the appointment, which was acceptable to Porter, who had a particular dislike of West-Pointers. For this I cared but little, because it was confessedly without knowledge of the officers individually and their merits, a close and a sweeping condemnation of all, — partly, I think, because he did not know them, and feared he should be compelled to play a subordinate part with them, while with a civilian general he would have superiority.

For three months, while Porter has been organizing the Squadron, nothing has been heard of McClernand until since the attack on Vicksburg, and now it is merely to tell us he has abandoned the place and withdrawn his forces.

The rumor of the capture of the Harriet Lane with the little garrison at Galveston is confirmed. I am grieved and depressed, not so much for the loss of the Harriet Lane as from a conviction that there has been want of good management. It is about three months since we took Galveston, and yet a garrison of only three hundred men was there when the Rebel army approached the place. Some one is blamable for this neglect.

The court martial on Fitz John Porter closed last Saturday, and the rumor is that he was at once unanimously acquitted. Of the facts I know nothing. I have read none of the evidence. Shall be glad if he is blameless and it shall so appear. My impressions were that while he and some others were not disloyal, as charged, they did not support and sustain the general in command, Pope, in a great crisis as they should have done; that they performed their duty to the letter of the law, perhaps, but not with alacrity and zeal; that while they did not wish the country to suffer a reverse, it would not grieve them if Pope did. In all this I may be doing certain officers injustice. They were, however, the impressions made upon me at the time when disaster was impending and our soldiers were giving their blood and their lives to the country. I am no admirer of Pope, who has the reputation among those who know him of being untruthful and wholly unreliable, a braggart and blusterer. Wrong may be to some extent done him, but there is some cause for what is said of him. He was instrumental in bringing Halleck here, and Halleck gave him the army in return. Both came from the West, and, aided by Stanton and Chase, Pope was placed in command over generals who were his superiors in age, experience, and qualifications. This was as much, to say the least, to humiliate McClellan as to serve the country. Pope preceded Halleck here, but it was the same influence that initiated the two. It is not difficult to see who is the cause of their being here to supplant McClellan, whose tardy inaction here and on the Peninsula disheartened the nation. Fitz John Porter was one of the generals who had great faith in McClellan, who sympathized with him in good and evil fortune, but who was destitute of faith in Pope, as were nearly all his associates, who each, like their commander, felt wronged, almost insulted, by the exaltation of an officer from the Western Department, for whom they had not high regard, placed over them. The change of commanders could not inspire him with confidence and zeal,

but if he permitted it to impair his efficiency he is inexcusable.

January 13, *Tuesday*. Received this A.M. from Admiral Du Pont an intercepted mail captured off Charleston. Reed Saunders, who had the mail in charge, threw it overboard, as he supposed, but the master of the vessel, once a volunteer acting master in our service whom I had dismissed for drunkenness, practiced a deception, and Saunders threw over something else than the mail, which the master secreted, retained, and delivered, and thereby saved his bacon. The mail was not forwarded to its destination, as Seward directed it should be, but opened. Numerous and important dispatches from Mallory, Memminger, Benjamin,[1] etc., etc., disclose important facts. Took some of the more interesting to Cabinet council.

Was waited upon by a large committee composed mostly of old friends and associates sent here by Connecticut to procure the location of a navy yard at New London. Mr. Speaker Carter was chairman and chief spokesman; wanted a navy yard at New London for defensive purposes, for the benefit to be derived from a large establishment located in the State; but little had been expended in Connecticut by the Federal Government; thought it a duty to look out for our own State; if the Union should be broken up, it would be well to have such an establishment as I had proposed in our own limits, etc. Assured the committee if Congress decided to establish a navy yard at New London I should not oppose but would heartily coöperate to make it what was wanted and what it should be. That the small yard at Philadelphia was totally insufficient, and if, in removing it, Congress should decide to go to New London instead of remaining on the Delaware, I should submit to the decision, but I could not, in honesty, sincerity, and as an American citizen acting for all, recommend

[1] Heads respectively of the Navy, Treasury, and State Departments in the Confederate Government.

it. That I had never supposed that the true interest of the country would be promoted by such a transfer; that, much as I loved my native State, I could not forget I was acting for the whole country and for no one locality. That League Island on the Delaware possessed some peculiar advantages that belonged to no other navy yard nor to New London; that it had been tendered, a free gift, by the city of Philadelphia as a substitute for the present contracted wharfage in the city; that I had conscientiously advised its acceptance, and I could not do otherwise than to still act in accordance with my convictions of what I deemed best for the whole country by continuing to recommend its acceptance, whatever might be determined in regard to a navy yard at New London, which was an altogether different matter.

January 15, *Thursday*. Have been interested for the last two or three days in reading, when I had time, letters that were taken from the intercepted mail. Most of them are from intelligent writers in the best circles at Richmond. In these communications, freely written in friendly confidence, there [crops] out a latent feeling of hope for peace and restoration of once happier days. There is distress and deprivation; the spirit of hate engendered by strife is there, but no happiness nor inward satisfaction over the desolation which active hostilities have caused. Strange that so many intelligent beings should be so madly influenced.

A number of Senatorial elections have recently taken place. Cameron has not succeeded even by corruption, and it is well he did not. I felt relieved when I heard he was defeated, though I did not rejoice in the success of his opponent, whose sympathies are reputed to be with the Secessionists.

January 16, *Friday*. Little of interest in the Cabinet. Chase, who has been absent a week, was present; Stanton did not attend. No navy or army matters discussed. Chase

says the New-Yorkers are generally coming into his financial views, that all in Philadelphia approve them; thinks they should be made a party test. No one responded to this, — an indication that they were not prepared to have him set up a standard of financial, political, or party orthodoxy for them.

A flurry in the Senate to-day over a letter from General Meigs, who had been coarsely assailed a day or two since by Wilkinson of Minnesota. The Senatorial dignity was ruffled by the manly rebuke of the soldier. There is an impotent and ridiculous attempt at self-sufficient and presuming airs, an exhibition of lame and insolent arrogance, on the part of many Senators towards men who are, to say the least, their equals in every good quality. Not long since J. P. Hale undertook to vent his personal spite in the Senate on Admiral Smith, who regards the public interest more than the wordy, personal, and selfish schemes of the New Hampshire Senator. The dignity of the Senator was bruised by the old sailor's blunt honesty, who demanded a committee with power and an investigation to whitewash the Senator or blackwash the Admiral.

January 19, *Monday*. Sent a letter to the two naval committees on the subject of filling vacancies in the Naval School. Members of Congress are disposed to evade all responsibility, and yet to carp at and criticize those of us who under imperious public necessity are compelled to act. The school should be full now if ever. I propose to fill it. The Members individually with few exceptions urge it. I ask them to give me at least the expression of their official, Senatorial opinion, but they shrink.

Received a telegraphic dispatch from Admiral Porter via Cairo of the capture of Dunnington and force at Arkansas Post. It is dated the 11th of January, — a long and protracted transit.

Baldwin of the Vanderbilt came up to-day from Hampton Roads, where he arrived yesterday from an unsuccess-

ful cruise for the Alabama, his vessel having been detained by Wilkes, which defeated the Department's plan.

There are rumors of the movement of the army at Falmouth. Incipient steps have doubtless been taken, but the storm has retarded operations.

January 21, *Wednesday*. The furious storm of last night and to-day fills us with apprehensions for the two ironclads, Nahant and Weehawken. It is hoped they put in to the Breakwater.

Wrote Seward, who makes inquiry respecting the construction of vessels for the Japanese, advising that the Government should have nothing to do with them, that Pruyn, the commissioner, ought not to commit or in any way implicate the Government.

January 22, *Thursday*. There is a rumor that Fitz John Porter, whose trial of over forty days has interested the public, is found guilty and has been cashiered. A different result was reported at the close of the trial a fortnight since. It was then said he was unanimously acquitted. I did not give implicit credit to that rumor, though I read none of the testimony; but my impressions and observation and all that I heard at the War Department in relation to Porter and other generals in the day and time of their occurrence for which he was arraigned were such I could not believe him wholly guiltless. The finding and punishment are severe, but I apprehend not entirely undeserved. I do not, however, impute to him disloyalty or treachery, but he was one of a mortified clique or combination who were vexed and dissatisfied, not without cause perhaps, that an inferior officer for whom they had not high regard should have been brought from a distant department and placed over them, their plans and operations broken up, and the commander whom they respected and to whom they were attached superseded and virtually disgraced. But if the country was made to suffer by this mortified partisan combination,

it was a crime which should not go unrebuked or unpunished. Porter may not have been the chief or only sinner, though the victim in this combination.

It was not a wise or judicious movement to place Pope at the head of the army last summer. If I am not mistaken those who participated in it now think so. An intrigue against McClellan brought him and Halleck here. Perhaps under no circumstances was Pope equal to the command given him, but I thought then and still believe he was not faithfully and fairly sustained by Porter and his associates. McClellan and most of his generals were vexed and irritated. They had some cause for dissatisfaction, but not to the injury of the country. Fitz John Porter, the intimate of McClellan, entered with all the ardor of a partisan and a clansman into the feelings and wrongs of his commander. He and the set to which he belonged did not, I thought at the time, wish Pope to acquire great glory; their zeal for victory was weak when he commanded, and the battle was lost. To some extent the results at the second Bull Run fight are attributable to the bad conduct of the generals. It has been evident the soldiers of the Army of the Potomac were not enthusiastic for Pope, — that they did not like him. This is true, but who chilled them? Who encouraged their dislike?

The Weehawken has arrived at Hampton Roads, having rode out the gale without making a port. No man but John Rodgers would have pushed on his vessel in that terrific storm. The Nahant, a better vessel, sought the Breakwater, as did some of our best wooden steamers.

General Burnside was to have made a forward movement, but the storm prevented. There are rumors that the army is much demoralized, that the soldiers do not give their confidence to Burnside, doubt his military capacity, and that some of the generals are cool. There is, I think, some truth and some exaggeration in all these reports.

January 23, *Friday.* As I anticipated, continued and

increasing abuses and much illicit traffic are going on under the army permits issued by General Dix to pass the blockade. It will be difficult to stop the abuse, now that it has commenced.

I have sent to Congress a communication with a view to getting an expression of opinion on the subject of League Island for naval purposes.

By request of Senator Foot of the Naval Committee, prepared a bill in relation to midshipmen and sent it with a letter.

January 24, *Saturday*. Had a telegram at midnight from Admiral Porter of captures on White River.

Senator Foot yesterday resigned his seat on the Naval Committee. Some disagreement with Hale, the chairman, who plays the part of a harlequin as well as a demagogue, — is, I am told, a constant marplot and very contentious in the Committee, does nothing to assist but much to embarrass and counteract the Department. Grimes also asked to be excused for the same reason as Foot; does not conceal his dislike and detestation of Hale. The Senate did right in refusing to excuse him.

F. A. Conkling,[1] who, the President says, is "a mighty onhandy man," called to give me a lecture and instructions relative to the appointment of midshipmen. Said Congress had the right to nominate and it was the duty of the Secretary to appoint. He could not tell me where Congress got that right, or the right to locate them in districts. Was compelled to admit that Congress could not dictate or nominate who should be judges of the Supreme Court, or say from what circuit or State the President should select them, but after a little controversy he acknowledged the cases were analogous. Forgetting his first starting-point, he wanted to know by what authority the Secretary of the Navy appointed midshipmen. I referred him to the Constitution and the laws, which I pointed out. Told him the

[1] A Representative from New York, brother of Roscoe Conkling.

President by and with the consent and approval of the Senate could make appointments, but Congress could by law confer or vest inferior appointments in the courts of law, heads of Departments, or the President alone; that Congress had, by law, vested the inferior appointment of midshipmen in the Secretary of the Navy, and I had, under that law, made appointments and should continue to do so. After tumbling over the statutes for some time, he found himself unable to controvert my position or to answer me, and left, apparently with a "flea in his ear." No man ever came upon me more dogmatically, or left more humble.

In answer to Senator Fessenden, who is pushed forward by Preble to urge his restoration, I replied that in my opinion the time had not yet arrived, but, having made known my views, I should leave the subject with the Senate, claiming no infallibility for myself. F. expresses a willingness to take upon himself any responsibility, but did not wish to act in opposition to me, who, he said, had some, but not many, unscrupulous assailants who were anxious to get him in collision with me. He complimented my administration of the Department, which he had honestly sustained because he honestly approved it, and had been annoyed with the mischievous manœuvres of the Chairman of the Naval Committee, which, however, were well understood in the Senate and did me no harm. Preble's note seeking restoration was surly and crusty. I suggested that on his own account he had better form a different one. Fessenden said he would consult any one I might name. Told him Davis or Smith were pretty good in such matters. F. laughed and said Smith wrote the note.

A California committee was on Tuesday before the Cabinet relative to the gauge of the Pacific Railroad. They gave each their views, — every one, I believe, in favor of the five-feet gauge. When they left, the President proposed a vote without discussion, — not that it should be conclusive but as an expression of the unbiased opinion of each. I was, for the present at least, for four eight and one half,

chiefly for the reason that a change could be made from the wide to the narrow at less expense than the reverse; the aggregate cost will be millions less; that usage, custom, practical experience, knowledge proved the superiority of that gauge if they had proved anything, etc., etc. I believe the majority were for that gauge.

The *Chronicle* contains the argument of Judge-Advocate Holt in Fitz John Porter's case. It seems to have been made after the finding of the Court instead of before, and is sent out with it as if in defense of the decision. The proceeding is singular and will be likely to cause censure. There is much of partisanship on both sides of Porter's case. I have abstained from being mixed up in it, and have not had the time, nor am I called upon, to read the voluminous proceedings and comments. If the conviction is correct, the punishment is hardly adequate to, or commensurate with, the offense. I have thought Porter not alone in fault. More than one appeared to me culpable for the disasters of that period.

There is a change of commander of the Army of the Potomac. Burnside relinquishes to Hooker. I hope the change may be beneficial, but have apprehensions. The President asked me about the time of the Second Battle of Bull Run, when Pope was to leave and McClellan was out of favor: "Who can take command of this army? Who is there among all these generals?" The address to me was unexpected, and without much consideration I named Hooker. The President looked approvingly, but said, "I think as much as you or any other man of Hooker, but — I fear he gets excited," looking around as he spoke. Blair, who was present, said he is too great a friend of John Barleycorn. I have mingled but little in the social or convivial gatherings of the military men, have attended fewer of the parades than any member of the Cabinet, and have known less of their habits. What I had seen and observed of Hooker had impressed me favorably, but our interviews had been chiefly business-wise and in the matter of duty, but there

was a promptness, frankness, and intelligence about him that compared favorably with some others. I remarked, "If his habits are bad, if he ever permits himself to get intoxicated, he ought not to be trusted with such a command," and withdrew my nomination. From what I have since heard, I fear his habits are not such as to commend him, that at least he indulges in the free use of whiskey, gets excited, and is fond of play. This is the result of my inquiries, and, with this reputation, I am surprised at his selection, though, aside from the infirmities alluded to, he doubtless has good points as an officer.

January 28, *Wednesday.* Word comes that the Oreto has escaped from Mobile and destroyed some vessels. Our information is vague and indefinite, but I doubt not it is in the main true.

Get as yet no official report of the disaster at Galveston. Farragut has prompt, energetic, excellent qualities, but no fondness for written details or self-laudation; does but one thing at a time, but does that strong and well; is better fitted to lead an expedition through danger and difficulty than to command an extensive blockade; is a good officer in a great emergency, will more willingly take great risks in order to obtain great results than any officer in high position in either Navy or Army, and, unlike most of them, prefers that others should tell the story of his well-doing rather than relate it himself.

Thurlow Weed retires from the *Evening Journal.* Is this an actual or pretended retirement? I always distrust him. He is strong and cunning; has a vigorous but not an ingenuous mind. Being a lifelong partisan, he cannot abandon party even for the country's welfare, though he may strive to have them assimilate. It grieved him that so many of his old party opponents should have been invited to the Cabinet and identified with the Administration. The President quietly laughs at Weed's intrigues to exclude Chase and myself. This was in the interest of Seward, his *alter ego.*

I remember that Seward on one occasion remarked in Cabinet, "Weed is Seward, and Seward is Weed; each approves what the other says and does." It was not a pleasant remark to some of us, and Chase said he did not recognize the identity; while he would yield a point as a matter of favor to Mr. Seward, he would not to Weed. His ostensible reason for abandoning the field of active politics at this time and leaving the *Journal* is because he cannot act with his friends and support the Administration. There is intrigue, insincerity, and scheming in all this. I have no confidence in him, and he doubtless knows it. The organization of the New York Legislature has been finally accomplished. If Weed does not go for Seward for the Senate,—which is at the bottom of this movement,—he will prop Morgan. King, their best man, is to be sacrificed. I do not think Weed is moving for the Senatorship for himself, yet it is so charged. He has professedly left his old friends, but it is to carry as many as possible with him into a new combination, where he and Seward will have Dix, whom they have captured and whom they are using while D. supposes they are earnest for him.

January 30, *Friday*. But little at the Cabinet. Chase is quite dejected, and manifested some rather suppressed irritation towards Blair and Seward as he sat beside me. Neither of them saw it; I was glad they did not.

Blair says Fitz John Porter is disliked by the army with the exception of McClellan, but is his special confidant. The President seemed to know this, but the disaffection as stated by Blair was more general than he supposed.

February 3, *Tuesday*. The I. P. Smith,[1] a purchased steamer of eleven guns, is reported captured in Stono River. We have information also that the blockaders have captured the Princess Royal with a valuable cargo, that was attempting to get into Charleston.

[1] This was the gunboat Isaac Smith, captured January 30. Her name was incorrectly reported.

The naval contractors are becoming clamorous for advanced prices in consequence of the depreciation of money. I have been expecting this. Cheapening money will be dear to the Government. Have warned Chase of it. It is only the beginning of evil.

The question of making an example by shooting a deserter was before the Cabinet. A case, considered a strong one, of a young man named Bud of Albany was presented. It did not strike me as so aggravated a case as some others, but the necessity of an example to check a rapidly increasing evil was unanimously assented to. The propriety of inflicting high penalty on some more conspicuous offender than a poor private soldier was suggested.

February 4, *Wednesday.* Governor E. D. Morgan was yesterday elected Senator in place of Preston King. If the latter was not to be returned, Morgan was probably the best of the competitors. He will make a useful Senator if he can persistently carry out his honest convictions, but I know of no one who can, just at this time, make good the place of King. He has been cheated and deceived. The country sustains a loss in his retirement. He is honest, faithful, unselfish, and earnestly patriotic.

We have the whole world agog with an account of an onset on our fleet before Charleston. The Mercedita is reported to have been surprised and sunk, and other vessels damaged. But the great hullabaloo is over a report that the whole blockading fleet ran away, — the foreign consuls at Charleston went out and could see none of the vessels, — and the blockade is by the Rebels declared raised. Seward called on me in great trepidation with these tidings. Told him most of the stuff was unworthy of a moment's consideration. Not unlikely the Mercedita may have been surprised and sunk, as she is of light draft and was probably close in. If there had been other vessels captured or sunk, we should have had their names. It looked to me as if the budget was made up for the European market by the foreign consuls,

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who are in fact Rebel agents, and I asked why their exequaturs were not annulled.

The New York papers have sensation headings over the Charleston news, and the *Tribune* has a ridiculous article about blockade, more wild, if possible, than Seward.

February 5, *Thursday.* Seward sent me this morning a scary dispatch which he proposed to give each of the foreign ministers, in relation to the blockade at Galveston, which he, unwisely, improperly, and without knowledge of the facts, admits has been raised, but which he informs them will be again immediately enforced. I was exceedingly annoyed that he should propose to issue such a document under any circumstances, and especially without consultation. It is one of those unfortunate assumptions, pregnant with error, in which he sometimes indulges. I toned and softened his paper down in several places, but told the clerk to give Mr. Seward my compliments and say to him I totally objected to his sending out such a paper.

February 6, *Friday.* Nothing of special importance at the Cabinet. Seward was absent, and I therefore called on him respecting his circular dispatch concerning the blockade at Galveston. His chief clerk, Mr. Hunter, was coy and shy. Neither he nor Mr. Seward were certain it had been sent. Some dispatches had not been sent. Seward said he had made all the alterations, but the clerk had not done his errand properly, did not tell him I objected, etc., etc. The Department seemed in confusion. Hunter watched Seward closely and could recollect only what Seward recollected. When I touched on the principles involved, I found Seward inexcusably ignorant of the subject of blockade. He admitted he had not looked into the books, had not studied the subject, had relied on Hunter. Hunter said he had very little knowledge and no practical experience on these matters except what took place during the Mexican blockade. Made Seward send for Wheaton; read to him a few pass-

ages. He seemed perplexed, but thought his circular dispatch as modified could do little harm. I am apprehensive that he has, in his ostentatious, self-assuming way, committed himself in conversation, and knows not how to get out of the difficulty. He says Fox told him the blockade was raised at Galveston. It is one of those cases where the Secretary of State has written a hasty letter without proper inquiry or knowledge of facts, and my fears are that he has made unwarranted admissions. After firing off his gun, he learns his mistake, — has "gone off half-cocked."

February 7, *Saturday.* Two or three Members of the House have had an opportunity to spend their wrath on me in relation to appointment of midshipmen. Calvert is quite angry on two or three matters and takes this opportunity to vent his spite. Washburne of Illinois, who has the reputation of being the "meanest man in the House," is sore under my reply to his inquiry concerning the "vessel Varuna"; others but little better than Washburne were abusive.

February 9, *Monday.* A special messenger from Admiral Du Pont with dispatches came to my house early this morning before I was awake, and would deliver them into no hand but my own. I received them at the door of my chamber. They relate to the late flurry at Charleston. The Mercedita was neither captured nor sunk, nor was any vessel of the Squadron. The Mercedita and Keystone State were injured in their steam-chests, and went to Port Royal for repairs. All the noise about raising the blockade was mere trash of the Rebels South and their sympathizers North. Dr. Bacon, the bearer of the dispatches, came to Philadelphia in the prize Princess Royal, captured running the blockade. Abuse will cease for a day, perhaps, under this intelligence. Am surprised at the ignorance which prevails in regard to the principles of blockade, which the late trouble has exposed.

February 10, *Tuesday*. Presented Colonel Hawley's name to the President for Brigadier-General with expressions of my regard. Was kindly received but no assurance given. Informed the President I should put Preble's case in his hands to be disposed of.

The nomination of Mark Howard for Collector of the Hartford District has been suspended in the Senate. Howard is a very faithful, competent, and excellent man for the office, but he and Senator Dixon, neighbors and formerly intimate friends, have latterly had some differences. Dixon takes advantage of his position as Senator to stab Howard in secret session, where H. can have no opportunity for self-defense. Senator Sumner, whom I met this evening, says Dixon came to him and asked, if a personal enemy, who abused, slandered, and defied him were before the Senate, would he vote for him. Sumner replied, No. Senator Doolittle admits he was in like manner approached; says it was embarrassing, for there is an implied understanding — a courtesy among Senators — that they will yield to the personal appeals of a Senator in appointments to office in his own town. I asked if it was possible that the Senate prostituted itself to gratify private animosities, — made itself a party to the personal quarrels of one of its members and gave him the means to wreak his vengeance on a worthy person without cause or justification? Doolittle attempted no defense; evidently did not like the attitude in which he was placed.

Thurlow Weed is in town. He has been sent for, but my informant knows not for what purpose. It is, I learn, to consult in regard to a scheme of Seward to influence the New Hampshire and Connecticut elections.

Some days since, Seward handed me a dispatch as I entered the President's office on Cabinet day, from Mr. Dayton at Paris, stating the French Government was pressing friendly mediation. I handed it back after reading, with the remark that it was wholly inadmissible. Seward made no reply, but handed the dispatch to others to read as they

came in. There was, I think, a response similar to mine from each. When I heard that Seward's factotum, Weed, had been called here I thought at once of Dayton's dispatch and schemes of adjustment. *Nous verrons.*

[In the lower House of Congress] after a violent attack by Calvert, Washburne, and a few others [on the subject of appointment of midshipmen], I was sustained by a vote of two to one, to the great chagrin of the clique, who, I am told, did not conceal their vexation.

February 14, *Saturday.* The *New York Tribune* of yesterday has an allusion to correspondence between Seward and myself relative to the British-African Slave Treaty, which indicates a purpose to get us by the ears.

February 16, *Monday.* General Foster was here yesterday, Sunday. Has let out the proposed attack on Charleston. This indicates what I have lately feared, — that Du Pont shrinks, dreads, the conflict he has sought, yet is unwilling that any other should undertake it, is afraid the reputation of Du Pont will suffer. This jeopardizes the whole, — makes a botched thing of it. I am disappointed, but not wholly surprised. A mandate he will obey, but I cannot well give it, for there are preliminaries and contingencies which would influence his movements and of which he must judge. The President desires Fox to go down to Charleston with General Foster, and came with Fox to see me. Told him it was a time when the active force of the Department was most wanted, it being near the close of the session of Congress, when every variety of call was made and delays to answer are inadmissible, and some important bills were to be acted upon and engineered through; nevertheless, if it was indispensable, he must go, but the very fact that Fox was sent on such an errand as proposed would touch Du Pont's pride, which is great, and do perhaps more harm than good. The President comprehended my views, and it was thought best that Fox should

not go, but Foster was informed of our ideas, — that the Navy could move independent of the army, and pass Sumter, not stop to batter it. Once in the rear of the fort and having the town under the guns of the ironclads, the military in the forts and on James Island would be compelled to come to terms. All is clear and well enough but Du Pont should have such a force as to inspire confidence in himself and men in order to insure a favorable result. Will and determination are necessary to success. While it is right that he should be circumspect and vigilant, I deplore the signs of misgiving and doubt which have recently come over him, — his shirking policy, getting in with the army, making approaches, etc. It is not what we have talked of, not what we expected of him; is not like the firm and impetuous but sagacious and resolute Farragut.

February 17, *Tuesday*. The President read to the Cabinet a correspondence between himself and Fernando Wood. The latter wrote the President on the 8th of December last that he had good reason to believe the South desired a restoration of the Union, etc. The President replied on the 12th of December that he had no confidence in the impression, but that he would receive kindly any proposition. Wood's letter was confidential; the President made his so. All was well enough, perhaps, in form and manner if such a correspondence was to take place. Wood is a Representative and his letter was brought to the President by Mayor Opdyke.[1] Mayor Opdyke and ex-Mayor Wood are on opposite extremes of parties, — so opposite that each is, if not antagonistic, not very friendly inclined to the President. Wood now telegraphs the President that the time has arrived when the correspondence should be published. It is a piece of political machinery intended for certain party purposes.

Chase says that Howard and Trumbull of the Senate were dissatisfied with their vote in favor of his bank bill,

[1] George Opdyke, Mayor of New York.

which they had given under the impression it was an Administration measure, but they had since understood that Usher and myself were opposed to it. I told him that my general views were better known to him than them, that I had no concealment on the subject; I had, however, no recollection of ever exchanging a word with either of those Senators concerning his measures; that I had given his financial questions little or no attention, had never read his bill, had but a general conception of his scheme; that, so far as I was informed, it was not in conformity with my old notions, as he well knew, for I had freely communicated with him early, though I had not been consulted recently and matters had taken such a shape I was glad I had not been, and that the whole subject had been committed to him and Congress. I had neither time nor inclination to study new theories, was wedded to old doctrines and settled principles. Usher said he had electioneered for the measure with sundry Congressmen, whom he named. I told him I had not with any one and did not intend to.

February 18, *Wednesday*. Have a long dispatch from Admiral Porter relative to operations on the Mississippi, a cut at the Delta between Helena and the Yazoo on the east, and at Lake Providence into Tensas on the west.

February 19, *Thursday*. A special Cabinet-meeting. The President desired a consultation as to the expediency of an extra session of the Senate. Chase favored. Seward opposed. No very decided opinion expressed by the others. I was disinclined to it.

The President has been invited to preside at a meeting for religious Christian purposes on Sunday evening. Chase favored it. All the others opposed it but Usher, who had a lingering, hesitating, half-favorable inclination to favor it. Has been probably talked with and committed to some extent; so with Chase.

The President on Tuesday expressed a wish that Captain

Dahlgren should be made an admiral, and I presented to-day both his and Davis's names.[1]

I wrote Senator Dixon a note, remonstrating against his misuse of power by opposing in secret session the appointment and confirmation of Howard as Collector; that it was not only wrong, officially, for he was not clothed with authority to revenge private grievances, but it would close the door to any reconciliation, and make lifelong enmities between those who were neighbors and should be friends; that he admitted, and every one knew, Howard was a good and correct officer. All, it seems, was unavailing, for I hear the Senate has failed to confirm the nomination. An inexcusable and unjustifiable act on the part of the Senate, a wrong to the country, a gross wrong and outrage on an American citizen of character and worth who is discharging his duty with fidelity, the peer of the Senators who are guilty of this prostitution of honor and trust. This act and this practice of the Senate are as repugnant to good government and as degrading as anything in the corrupt days of Roman history, or the rotten aristocracy of modern Europe.

February 22, *Sunday.* A severe snowstorm. Did not venture abroad. Had a call from Dahlgren, who is very grateful that he is named for admiral. Told him to thank the President, who had made it a specialty; that I did not advise it. He called with reference to a written promise the President had given one Dillon for $150,000 provided a newly invented gunpowder should prove effective. I warned Dahlgren that these irregular proceedings would involve himself and others in difficulty; that the President had no authority for it; that there was no appropriation in our Department from which this sum could be paid; that he ought certainly to know, and the President should understand, that we could not divert funds from their legitimate appropriation. I cautioned him, as I have had occa-

[1] Charles Henry Davis, who had defeated the Confederate fleet off Fort Pillow, and captured Memphis.

sion to do repeatedly, against encouraging the President in these well-intentioned but irregular proceedings. He assures me he does restrain the President as far as respect will permit, but his "restraints" are impotent, valueless. He is no check on the President, who has a propensity to engage in matters of this kind, and is liable to be constantly imposed upon by sharpers and adventurers. Finding the heads of Departments opposed to these schemes, the President goes often behind them, as in this instance; and subordinates, flattered by his notice, encourage him. In this instance, Dahlgren says it is the President's act, that he is responsible, that there is his written promise, that it is not my act nor his (D.'s).

Something was said to me some days since in regard to the great secret of this man Dillon, but I gave it no attention, did not like the manner, etc. So it was, I apprehend, with the War Department; and then Dillon went to the President with his secret, which I apprehend is no secret.

February 23, *Monday*. General Halleck informs me there is a rumor via Richmond that the steamer Queen of the West has been captured. He doubts its truth. I fear it may be so.

February 24, *Tuesday*. At the Cabinet-meeting the President expressed uneasiness at the rumor which he had just heard that the Queen of the West was captured. Told him what I heard yesterday from General Halleck. Stanton said he wholly discredited the story, but went and got the dispatches. On reading them, my apprehensions were increased. The President called on me later in the day, and we both came to the conclusion that the boat was lost to us.

February 25, *Wednesday*. Had a brief call from General McClellan this P.M. He looks in good health, but is evidently uncomfortable in mind. Our conversation was general, — of the little progress made, the censoriousness of

the public, of the dissatisfaction towards both of us, etc., etc. The letter of General Scott, of the 4th of October, 1861, complaining of his disrespect and wanting obedience, is just brought out.

I well remember an interview between these two officers about the period that letter was written, the President, myself, and two or three others being present. It was in General Scott's rooms opposite the War Office. In the course of conversation, which related to military operations, a question arose as to the number of troops there were in and about Washington. Cameron could not answer the question; McClellan did not; General Scott said no reports were made to him; the President was disturbed. At this moment Seward stated the several commands,—how many regiments had reported in a few days, and the aggregate at the time of the whole force. The statement was made from a small paper, and, appealing to McClellan, that officer replied that the statement approximated the truth. General Scott's countenance showed great displeasure. "This," said the veteran warrior, "is a remarkable state of things. I am in command of the armies of the United States, but have been wholly unable to get any reports, any statement of the actual forces, but here is the Secretary of State, a civilian, for whom I have great respect but who is not a military man nor conversant with military affairs, though his abilities are great, but this civilian is possessed of facts which are withheld from me. Military reports are made, not to these Headquarters but to the State Department. Am I, Mr. President, to apply to the Secretary of State for the necessary military information to discharge my duties?"

Mr. Seward explained that he had got his information by vigilance and attention, keeping account of the daily arrival of regiments, etc., etc. There was a grim smile on the old soldier. "And you, without report, probably ascertained where each regiment was ordered. Your labors and industry, Mr. Secretary of State, I know are very arduous,

but I did not before know the whole of them. If you in that way can get accurate information, the Rebels can also, though I cannot."

Cameron here broke in, half in earnest and half-ironical, and said we all knew that Seward was meddlesome, interfering in all the Departments with what was none of his business. He thought we had better go to our duties. It was a pleasant way of breaking up an unpleasant interview, and we rose to leave. McClellan was near the open door, and General Scott addressed him by name. "You," said the aged hero, "were called here by my advice. The times require vigilance and activity. I am not active and never shall be again. When I proposed that you should come here to aid, not supersede, me, you had my friendship and confidence. You still have my confidence."

I had, in the early stages of the War, disapproved of the policy of General Scott, which was purely defensive, — non-intercourse with the insurgents, shut them out from the world by blockade and military frontier lines, but not to invade their territory. The anaconda policy was, I then thought and still think, unwise for the country. The policy of General McClellan has not been essentially different, but he was called here with the assent if not by the recommendation of General Scott. It was evident from what transpired at the interview here mentioned that Mr. Seward, who had been in close intimacy with the veteran commander at first, had transferred his intimacy to the junior general, and the former felt it, — saw that he was becoming neglected, — and his pride was wounded.

That Seward kept himself well informed in the way he stated, I think was true, and he likely had his information confirmed by McClellan, with whom he almost daily compared notes and of whom he made inquiries. But McClellan is by nature reticent, — in many respects a good quality. Seward has great industry and an inquiring mind, and loves to possess himself of everything that transpires. Has an unfortunate inclination to run to subordinates for

information. Has in Meigs a willing assistant, and others who think it a compliment to be consulted by the Secretary of State, and are ready to impart to him all they know of the doings and intentions of their superiors. He has by his practice encouraged the President to do likewise and get at facts indiscreetly; but the President does this because he feels a delicacy in intruding, especially in business hours, on the heads of Departments. S. has no such delicacy, but a craving desire to be familiar with the transactions of each Department.

VII

Closing Hours of Congress — A Call from Senator Dixon — Proposed Issue of Letters of Marque— Delay in the Attack on Charleston — Impending War with England — Conversations with Sumner about the Letters of Marque — Conversation with the President on the Subject of Letters of Marque and the Attitude of England — Talk with Seward on the Relation of the Navy Department to the Letters of Marque — The First Application for Letters of Marque — The Expected Attack on Charleston — News of Repulse at Charleston — The Peterhoff's Mails — Commander Rhind and the Ironclads at Charleston — The Elletts and the Ram Fleet — Du Pont's Failure at Charleston — The President takes a Hand in the Peterhoff Contention — Blockade-Runners on the Rio Grande — Du Pont's Vanity and Weakness — Sumner's Conversation with Lord Lyons on the Peterhoff Matter.

March 5, *Thursday*. Went on the evening of the 3d inst. to the Capitol. Spent most of the time until eleven o'clock in the President's room. It is my first visit to the Capitol since the session commenced. Was for half an hour on the floor of the House. Thirty-four years ago spent the night of the 3d of March on the floor of the Representatives' Chamber. It was in the old Representatives' Hall. Andrew Stevenson was Speaker. I first saw Henry Clay that night. He came from the President's room to the House about ten. It was to him the scene of old triumphs, and friends crowded around him.

I subsequently went into the Senate Chamber, a much larger but less pleasant room than the old one, which I first visited in the last days of the second Adams. If the present room is larger, the Senators seemed smaller. My first impressions were doubtless more reverential than those of later times.

The deportment of the Members in both houses was calm and in favorable contrast with what I have ever seen of the closing hours of any session, and I have witnessed many. There was nothing boisterous, and but little that was factious. It was nearly midnight when we left. On the morn-

ing of the 4th I was at the Capitol, from ten till twelve. All passed off harmoniously.

The recent dispatches of Consul Morse at London, and information from other sources, render it necessary measures should be taken to prevent the Rebels from getting a considerable naval force afloat.

March 6, *Friday.* Appointments considered yesterday and to-day. Generally conceded that Field of California was the man for the Supreme Court. The Court of Claims seems a peace court. The Court for the District is more important, and unfortunately the hearts and sympathies of the present judges are with the Rebels.

March 7, *Saturday night.* The week has been one of steady, incessant employment. I feel I have been overtasked and am much exhausted. Must have rest.

Two rather important bills were got, I may say smuggled, through Congress, affecting the Navy Department, which I never saw. One of them, relating to an Advisory Board, was brought to the President for approval on the 4th of March, which he handed to me. On a hasty perusal I requested him not to sign it until it could have a more thorough examination. We sent for Grimes to make inquiry concerning it. He said the bill had never been discussed; he did not approve of it; that he had expected it would be killed in the House. The President passed it to me for criticism and farther examination, and return to him with my views. The other bill relates to matters of prize, and must have been got through surreptitiously. It is crude and objectionable in several respects.

Sedgwick, Chairman of the Naval Committee in the House, has been active in getting through a bill for the codification of the naval laws, and expects to perform the service of codification. All in the Department and the officers generally desire him to perform the service, but there are objections in my mind to his selection, which

I should urge, were it not that the President has another candidate, a gentleman who has no knowledge of naval affairs or naval or admiralty law, but who, qualified or not, wants a place.

March 9, *Monday.* Had a call from Senator Dixon. Is depressed and unhappy. Regrets that he opposed the confirmation of Howard. Says if the subject was to be gone over again his course would be different. I did not attempt to soften or excuse his conduct, but told him I was sorry he did not listen to my suggestions. He proposed several names for the place. I had no other candidate than my old friend James G. Bolles, and he, though naming two or three others, fell in with it.

March 10, *Tuesday.* I saw last evening a communication from the State Department inclosing several pages of regulations for letters of marque. The subject was to-day before the Cabinet, and there is a stronger disposition for the policy than I expected. I told the President I had given the proposed regulations but a cursory examination. The subject was therefore postponed to our Friday meeting, with an understanding that I should in the mean time examine them and report if they were objectionable. On looking over the sections, I find they are a transcript of the laws of 1812 and 1813, which the Secretary of State has embodied in a series of regulations which he proposes to issue. The old laws of half a century ago have expired. It is not pretended they have vitality. But the Secretary of State legislates by regulations. I am not favorably impressed with the law or the regulations, nor with the idea of sending out privateers against a couple of piratical cruisers, even if there are private parties fools enough to go on that hunt, which he says there are, but I doubt. The law undertakes to delegate legislative power to the President, which is in itself wrong. But the subject is, I fear, a foregone conclusion. Both Seward and Chase favor it, and the

commercial community is greatly exasperated against the robbers. If the subject goes forward, S. will turn the whole labor and responsibility over to the Navy Department.

March 12, *Thursday*. Had a letter from Chief Engineer Stimers last night. Says the attack on Charleston will be delayed; suggests it will be made the first week in April. It made me nervous and restless through the night; got but little sleep. The delay, hesitation, uncertainty in the Army of the Potomac over again. Du Pont is getting as prudent as McClellan; is very careful; all dash, energy, and force are softened under the great responsibility. He has a reputation to preserve instead of one to make.

Stimers arrived this morning and read to me the minutes of a council held on board the Wabash. The army officers were present, and it is plain they were a drawback on naval operations. Talk of beginning the attack on Charleston by an assault on the sand-batteries at the mouth of the harbor instead of running past them. Of obstructions and torpedos little is known, but great apprehensions are entertained. Stimers is sent up to get more ironclads and another raft. The President came in, and the whole subject was recounted. His views and mine are alike. To delay for the objects stated till April will be to postpone to May. Expressed ourselves very decidedly, and told Stimers to hurry back.

Talked over the subject of Rebel privateers building in England. Said to the President and Mr. Seward I thought England should be frankly informed that our countrymen would not be restrained from active operations if Great Britain persisted in making war on our commerce under Confederate colors.

March 17. Returned last evening from strictly confidential visit to New York.

Some discussion in Cabinet-meeting to-day on letters of marque. Seward and Chase are both strong advocates of

the measure. Am surprised that Chase should favor it, for he must be sensible of the consequences. He has, I think, committed himself somewhat hastily to some of the indignant but inconsiderate men in the shipping interest who are sufferers. Seward has no knowledge on the subject, nor any conception of the effect of letting loose these depredators under government sanction. There is such a general feeling against the English, who are conniving with and aiding the Rebels, that privateering is becoming popular with the Administration and country. Statesmen who should check and restrain the excited, erring popular current are carried along with it. I suggested some doubts of the expediency of the proposed proceedings, and the principles involved. In the first place I queried whether Congress could depute legislative power to the Executive, as was assumed. I asked Seward if he had any money to pay the promised bounties, and if he was of opinion there could be fines and criminal punishment inflicted by Executive regulations merely. Seward said he had no money; knew not whether there was any appropriation from which funds could be taken; if not, he must pledge the Government. This I opposed, and no one sustained Seward or expressed an opinion on the subject. As regarded penal inflictions, fines, criminal punishment by regulation he had no doubt whatever, should not hesitate in the least. I could admit no such power on the part of the Executive. My doubts and suggestions, I perceived, set others thinking. Chase became silent.

These notions in regard to privateers and letters of marque, though crude, erroneous, and fraught with evil, have been maturing for some time, and I do not mistake in placing much of the mischief to the State Department, which would be irresponsible for Navy transgressions. The *Times* of New York and the *Chronicle* of this city and papers of that particular phase of partyism, which never [act] without prompting from a certain quarter, have been writing up the matter and getting the public mind excited. The

Chronicle pronounces the privateers to be a volunteer navy like volunteer forces on land. The *Times* mixes up letters of marque with the Navy Department, which it blames for delaying to issue the necessary authority, innocently unaware that it is a subject pertaining to that Department of the Government whose head it would never intentionally injure.

Conflicting accounts concerning Farragut's command on the lower Mississippi. The Rebel accounts state he passed Port Hudson with his vessel, the others being driven back, with the exception of the steamer Mississippi, which all say was grounded and blown up. Our account represents that all the fleet passed up except the Mississippi.

The accounts from Porter, above Vicksburg, are not satisfactory. He is fertile in expedients, some of which are costly without adequate results. His dispatches are full of verbosity of promises, and the mail which brings them also brings ludicrous letters and caricatures to Heap, a clerk who is his brother-in-law, filled with laughable and burlesque accounts of amusing and ridiculous proceedings. These may be excusable as a means of amusement to keep up his spirits and those of his men, but I should be glad to witness, or hear of something more substantial and of energies employed in what is really useful. Porter has capabilities and I am expecting much of him, but he is by no means an Admiral Foote.

The progress of the squadron and troops at Charleston is slow and unsatisfactory. I apprehend the defenses are being strengthened much faster than the assailants. Du Pont has attacked Fort McAllister and satisfied himself that the turret vessels are strong and capable of great endurance, but at the same time he doubtless made the Rebels aware of these facts.

March 31. For a fortnight I have been ill and really unfit for duty, yet have been absent from the Department but a single day, the only day I have lost in Washington

since March 4, 1861. But for the illness of Mr. Faxon, Chief Clerk, I should have abstained a day or two from labor. Fatigued and exhausted, I have not felt able to jot down current events from day to day.

With some effort, though with indifferent health, I have drawn up a communication to Mr. Seward on the subject of letters of marque. But after the council to-day he read a dispatch from Mr. Adams, communicating two letters from Earl Russell, which are insolent, contemptuous, and mean aggression if not war. It is pretty evident that a devastating and villainous war is to be waged on our commerce by English capital and English men under the Rebel flag with the connivance of the English Government, which will, and is intended to, sweep our commerce from the ocean. Only by a decided, firm, and resolute tone can the country be rescued, and I am by no means certain that will be sufficient. We are in no condition for a foreign war. Torn by dissensions, an exhausting civil war on our hands, we have a gloomy prospect, but a righteous cause that will ultimately succeed. God alone knows through what trials, darkness, and suffering we are to pass. There is a disinclination to look these troubles which threaten us boldly in the face. I felt oppressed, as did the others. A long vista of direful calamities opens before us. Mr. Seward is earnest to get out privateers to catch the Alabama and the blockade-runners. The President thinks they should try that policy. Chase has lately favored it. I have no faith in it as against the Rebels, who have no commerce to be injured, but if we are to have a conflict with England, letters of marque and every means in our power must be put in requisition against that faithless nation. I have, therefore, doubts about sending the letter which I have prepared.

Earl Russell gives us to understand the English Government do not intend to interpose to prevent the Rebels from building, buying, and sending out from England cruisers, semi-pirates, to prey upon our commerce. In plain language, English capital is to be employed in destroying our

shipping interests. If we are silent and submissive, they will succeed, and we shall waken to our condition when our vessels and merchant seamen are gone.

The condition of affairs opens a vast field. Should a commercial war commence, it will affect the whole world. The police of the seas will be broken up, and the peaceful intercourse of nations destroyed. Those governments and peoples that have encouraged and are fostering our dissensions will themselves reap the bitter fruits of their malicious intrigues. In this great conflict, thus wickedly begun, there will be likely to ensue an uprising of the nations that will shatter existing governments and overthrow the aristocracies and dynasties not only of England but of Europe.

I close my book and this month of March with sad and painful forebodings. The conduct and attitude of Great Britain, if persisted in, foreshadow years of desolation, of dissolution, of suffering and blood.

Should April open, as we hope, with success at Charleston and Vicksburg, there will be a change in the deportment and conduct of England. Her arrogance and subtle aggression will be checked by our successes, and by that alone. She has no magnanimity, no sense of honor or of right. She is cowardly, treacherous, and mean, and hates and fears our strength. In that alone is our security.

April 2. Had a call last evening and again to-day from Senator Sumner. Our conversation was chiefly on our foreign relations, the unfortunate condition of public affairs, the inexcusable attitude of England, and the question of letters of marque. On the latter subject he is much dissatisfied with Mr. Seward. He informs me that he was opposed to the passage of the law at the late session, and is, I am glad to see, quite sensitive on the subject. I thought the law well enough as a precautionary measure, a warning to the mischievous spirits abroad, an authorization to the President in case of necessity, and especially as a weapon to coerce England into propriety. The power granted was ex-

traordinary and to be used with discretion, but Mr. Seward, having obtained the authority, is disposed to exercise it. The merchants having been loud and profuse in their complaints and promises, he has taken it for granted that they would at once avail themselves of the law, and make a rush in a random search for a couple of lean and hungry wolves that are abroad, which would be difficult to catch and valueless when caught. I have questioned whether he could beguile merchants into such an investment, and he begins to feel uneasy that none have come forward as he expected.

In a letter which I commenced some days since and finished Saturday night, I put upon paper some of the suggestions, views, and doubts I have from time to time expressed in our discussions. This letter I gave out to be copied, and it was on my table for signature when I returned yesterday from Cabinet council. The English news was such that I laid it aside unsigned, and it was lying on the table when Sumner came in. He stated, among other things, he had been to the State Department and that Seward had given him the substance of the last dispatches. He asked if I had seen them. I answered that I had, and was so disgusted with them that I had laid by a letter which I had prepared in opposition to the current feeling which prevailed on the subject of letters of marque. He wished to read it, and after doing so complimented the letter with emphasis, and begged I would sign and send it.

[The letter referred to above was signed and sent with date of March 31. It read as follows:]

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
31 Mar., 1863.

SIR,

When discussing the regulations concerning "Letters of Marque," &c a few days since, I made certain suggestions, and you invited me to communicate any views I might entertain, in writing.

I have felt some delicacy, I may say disinclination, to take any active part in this matter, because I have from the beginning of our difficulties discouraged the policy of privateering in such a

war as this we are now waging. The rebels have no commercial marine to entice and stimulate private enterprise and capital in such undertakings, provided the policy were desirable. We, however, have a commerce that invites the cupidity, zeal and spirit of adventure, which, once commenced, will be difficult to regulate or suppress. A few privateers let loose among our shipping, like wolves among sheep, would make sad havoc, as the Alabama and the Florida bear witness.

It is proposed to encourage private enterprize to embark in undertaking to capture the two wolves or privateers that are abroad devastating the seas, and it is said, in addition to the wolves they may be authorized to catch blockade runners. The inducement, I apprehend, will not meet a favorable response. There may be vessels fitted out to capture unarmed prizes, but not of sufficient force to meet and overcome the Alabama; if not, the great end and purpose of the scheme will fail of accomplishment.

To clothe private armed vessels with governmental power and authority, including the belligerent right of search, will be likely to beget trouble, and the tendency must unavoidably be to abuse. Clothed with these powers reckless men will be likely to involve the Government in difficulty, and it was in apprehension of that fact, and to avoid it, I encountered much obloquy and reproach at the beginning of the rebellion, and labored to institute a less objectionable policy.

Propositions for privateers, for yacht squadrons, for naval brigades, volunteer navy, &c., &c. were, with the best intentions in most instances, pressed upon the Dep't, regardless of the consequences that might follow from these rude schemes of private warfare. It was to relieve us of the necessity of going into these schemes of private adventure, that the "Act to provide for the temporary increase of the Navy," approved July 24, 1861, was so framed as to give authority to take vessels into the Naval service and appoint officers for them, temporarily, to any extent which the President may deem expedient. Under other laws, seamen may be enlisted and their wages fixed by executive authority; and the officers and men so taken temporarily into the Naval service are subject to the laws for the government of the Navy. An "Act for the better government of the Navy," approved July 17, 1862, grants prize money to "any armed vessel in the service of the United States," in the same manner as to vessels of the Navy.

These laws, therefore, seem, and were intended to provide all the advantages of letters of marque, and yet prevent in a great measure the abuses liable to spring from them. Private armed vessels, adopted temporarily into the Naval service, would be more certainly and immediately under the control of the government, than if acting only under a general responsibility to law.

It will be necessary to establish strict rules for the government of private armed vessels, as to some extent they will be likely to be officered and manned by persons of rude notions and free habits. Congress after authorizing Letters of Marque in the War of 1812, adopted the necessary legislation for the vessels bearing them, by the Act of June 26th of that year. This act has not been revived. The recent "Act concerning letters of marque" &c. &c. authorizes the President to "make all needful rules and regulations for the government and conduct of private armed vessels, furnished with letters of marque." In pursuance of this authorization, the "regulations" have been prepared, embracing the provisions of the statute enacted during the War of 1812. These regulations establish, as the statute did, a penal code. They impose fines and assume to authorize punishments, including even capital punishment.

As suggested in our interview, I question the validity of such proceedings. Can Congress delegate this power of penal legislation to the President? and if to the President, why may it not to any branch of the Executive?

If it can be granted for this special purpose — the government of private armed vessels — why not for any other purpose? And if it can delegate the power of penal legislation, why could it not delegate any other power, or powers, to the President, to Commissioners, or even to a Committee of its own body, to sit during the recess? Why could it not delegate to the Secretary of the Treasury to legislate respecting imports and foreign trade, or to the Post-Master General full power of legislation respecting post offices and post routes?

The power of imposing penalties and inflicting punishments is the essence of legislative power, for it is the penalty of transgression that gives force to law. These regulations also establish rewards as well as penalties. They provide that a large bounty shall be paid to private armed vessels in certain cases. But no fund is appropriated for the purpose by the Act, nor has any provision elsewhere been made for it. Can Congress delegate to the

President the power to appropriate the public moneys, or to take them without specific appropriation, or pledge the public faith at his discretion for an indefinite amount?

As I have already said, I have doubts in these particulars. They are expressed with some reluctance, because in the uneasy condition of the public mind, growing out of the lawless depredations of the semi-piratical cruisers that are abroad, I am unwilling to interpose anything which may be construed into an obstacle, to repress public indignation, which is so justly excited. I did not regret that Congress enacted a law authorizing letters of marque; because I verily believe that, with it, England can be made to prevent her mercenary citizens from making war on our commerce under a flag that has no recognized nationality. If the police of the sea is to be surrendered, and rovers built by English capital and manned by Englishmen are to be let loose to plunder our commerce, let England understand that her ships will suffer, and her commerce also be annoyed and injured by private armed ships. With her distant and dependent colonies, no nation has greater cause to oppose maritime robbery and plunder, such as is being inflicted on us by Englishmen and English capital, than Great Britain.

The West Indies are, notoriously, harbors of refuge for the corsairs that are plundering our merchants, as well as for the infamous and demoralizing business of running our blockade, to encourage the insurgents who are waging war on our government. Of these ports, those of England are the worst, and a vast amount of English capital is engaged in illicit traffic, and her people and authorities exhibit sympathy for, and afford aid to, the insurgents and their abettors, and corresponding opposition to this Government.

The English ship-yards are filled with vessels built and building for the rebel service, and if measures are not taken to prevent, these will soon swarm the seas to capture, condemn and destroy American property, without a port into which they can send their captures for adjudication. Enjoying greater advantages than the corsairs and sea-rovers that once infested the ocean, because protected, harbored, & sheltered by governments in alliance with, and professedly friendly to us, while ordinary pirates are outlaws, this species of lawless outrage cannot be permitted to go on.

England should be warned that we cannot permit this indirect

war to continue with impunity — that it will provoke and justify retaliation, and that if her people and government make war upon our commerce, by sending abroad rovers with no nationality, to prey upon the property of our citizens, it will be impossible to restrain our people from retaliatory measures.

I am, respectfully,
Your Obdt. Servt.
GIDEON WELLES,
Secty. of Navy.

HON. WM. H. SEWARD,
Secty. of State.

Informed Admiral Foote that the Secretary of State desired he should go to New York in the service of the State Department, on the subject of letters of marque. He expressed his readiness to obey orders, but asked the object of detailing him. I gave him an outline of proceedings and what appeared to be the purpose of Mr. Seward, which was not very clear, or could not be plainly stated. No doubt he believes it will give importance to the Secretary of State to have a naval officer of the standing of Foote attached to the State Department and acting under its orders.

The President called at my house this evening, chiefly to see the letter which I had prepared concerning letters of marque. Senator Sumner had gone directly from the Navy Department to him, and so made known his gratification at my views and the manner in which I had stated them that the curiosity of the President was excited and he desired to read the letter. I informed him that the last thing I did before leaving the Department was to sign and send it to the Secretary of State; that I perhaps should not have done it, though, as he (the President) was aware, I had differed with him and others on this subject and looked upon it as a dangerous step, but since reading the last English dispatches, I was less opposed to the measure than I had been.

The opportunity being favorable and he disposed to converse and apparently interested in my remarks, I took occasion to enlarge upon the topic more fully than I had done

in our Cabinet discussions. I started out with the proposition that to issue letters of marque would in all probability involve us in a war with England. [I said] that I had so viewed this question from the beginning, though he and Mr. Seward had not; that I was not prepared to deny that it might not be best for us to move promptly with that object in view, though it had not yet been urged or stated; but that if we were to resort to letters of marque we should do it understandingly and with all the consequences before us. The idea that private parties would send out armed ships to capture the Alabama and one, possibly two, other rovers of the Rebels was too absurd to be thought of for a moment. If privateers were fitted out for any purpose it would be to capture neutral vessels intended to run the blockade or supposed to be in that service. It was not difficult for us to foresee that such a power in private hands would degenerate into an abuse for which this Government would be held responsible. The Rebels have no commerce to invite private enterprise. So far as the Rebels were concerned, therefore, I had been opposed to committing the Government to the measure. But the disclosures recently made had given a different aspect to the question. There was little doubt the British Government and British capital were encouraging the rebellion; that that Government intended to interpose no obstacle to prevent the sending out of privateers from British ports to depredate upon our commerce; that these privateers, though sailing under the Confederate flag, would be the property of British merchants; that the rich plunder would repay the lawless English adventurer, knowing he had the sanction of his Government; that this combination of British capital with Rebel malignity and desperation would despoil our commerce and drive it from the seas. Our countrymen would not quietly submit to these wrongs and outrages, and allow Englishmen to make war upon us in disguise under the Rebel flag. We ought, therefore, to have an immediate and distinct understanding with the English Government. It should be

informed in terms that could not be mistaken or misunderstood that if this policy was persisted in we should in self-defense be under the necessity of resorting to reprisals. In this view the law which authorized letters of marque had appeared to me proper, and might be made useful as a menace and admonition to England; and I repeated what I had said to the Secretary of State in reply to a remark of his that we must make more extensive naval operations against the Rebels by issuing letters of marque to annoy them, — that letters of marque, instead of annoying them, destitute as they were of commerce, would aid them, for that step would involve war with England. If the Secretary of State would be less yielding and more decisive in asserting our rights with that power, it would, I thought, be better for the country.

I then opened on the subject generally. England is taking advantage of our misfortunes and would press upon us just as far as we would bear to be pressed. She rejoiced in our dissensions and desired the dismemberment of the Union. With this rebellion on our hands we were in no condition for a war with her, and it was because we were in this condition that she was arrogant and presuming. A higher and more decisive tone towards her will secure a different policy on her part. A war with England would be a serious calamity to us, but scarcely less serious to her. She cannot afford a maritime conflict with us, even in our troubles, nor will she. We can live within ourselves if worse comes to worse. Our territory is compact, facing both oceans, and in latitudes which furnish us in abundance without foreign aid all the necessaries and most of the luxuries of life; but England has a colonial system which was once her strength, but is her weakness in these days and with such a people as our countrymen to contend with. Her colonies are scattered over the globe. We could, with our public and private armed ships, interrupt and destroy her communication with her dependencies, her colonies, on which she is as dependent for prosperity as they on her.

I was therefore in favor of meeting her face to face, asking only what is right but submitting to nothing that is wrong.

If the late dispatches are to be taken as the policy she intends to pursue, it means war, and if war is to come it looks to me as of a magnitude greater than the world has ever experienced, — as if it would eventuate in the upheaval of nations, the overthrow of governments and dynasties. The sympathies of the mass of mankind would be with us rather than with the decaying dynasties and the old effete governments. Not unlikely the conflict thus commenced would kindle the torch of civil war throughout Christendom, and even nations beyond. I desired no such conflict in my day, and therefore hoped and believed the policy and tone of England might be modified, but it would require energy, resolution, and a firm determination on our part to effect it.

The President listened, for I did most of the talking, as he evidently wished, and showed much interest and accord in what I said. He assented consequently to most that I uttered and controverted nothing. It was evident I suggested some ideas that had not before occurred to him, and I am not without hope that the tone of our foreign affairs, particularly with England, may be different.

The President spoke, as he always has done with me, doubtingly of Porter's schemes on the Mississippi, or rather the side movements to the Yazoo on the east and Red River on the west. Said the long delay of Du Pont, his constant call for more ships, more ironclads, was like McClellan calling for more regiments. Thought the two men were alike, and said he was prepared for a repulse at Charleston.

April 3, *Friday*. Had some side talk with Seward at the Cabinet-meeting, on letters of marque. He persists in the policy, but I think begins to have some misgivings. Insists on having a naval officer assigned him, on whom he can devolve the labor. I requested him to employ some of his

own Department force or a civilian in whom he had confidence; told him the subject belonged exclusively to the State Department; the Secretary of State had it in charge in the War of 1812 by law, and I desired the Navy should not now be blended with the proceeding. He admitted his object in asking for a naval officer was to be relieved of responsibility and details. The truth is, he has pressed forward this measure without knowledge, or examination, or practical experience, but has vague indefinite notions that privateers may be efficient against the Rebels, that they will constitute a force appendant to his Department, that there will be many of them, and that he will derive credit from their exploits. If his scheme fails, and a naval officer has charge of that part of his duties, the Navy and Navy Department will bear the censure. Foote, whom he most desires should be detailed, adroitly declines the honor of being attached to the State Department in this work, and has recommended Admiral Davis, who is acceptable and willing to take the position which Foote declines.

Seward tells me he already has an application from responsible parties who want a letter of marque, and assures me there will be a flood of applications, but I am still incredulous. Our merchants will not spend their money in the idle scheme of attempting to spear sharks for wool. In the case of this first application Seward wishes me, as he is not yet prepared and the parties are ready, to take the case as I have suggested might be done under the Act of July, 1861; says it will only be temporary.

Late in the day Davis came to me from the State Department with the papers in this case. I find they are not unknown to me. One Sybert, a Prussian, I believe, by birth but a citizen of South Carolina, wants to go privateering. He called on me some days ago for papers, and I sent him to the State Department. I warned Davis to beware of adventurers, and expressed my want of confidence in the man and the movement, though Seward declared the parties were responsible.

April 4, *Saturday*. Had a message from the President, who wished to see me and also Assistant Secretary Fox. Found the matter in hand to be the Prussian adventurer Sybert, who was anxious his vessel should be taken into the naval service. The President said Seward was extremely anxious this should be done and had sent Sybert to him. I inquired if he had seen Sybert. He replied that he had and that the man was now in the audience room. He learned from Seward and Sybert that he (Sybert) had a vessel of one hundred tons into which he would put a screw, if authorized, would go on blockade, and would do more than the whole squadron of naval vessels. I asked the President if he gave credit to the promises of this man, whom Mr. Seward had sent to me as coming from responsible parties, though I knew none of them, had seen or heard of none but this adventurer himself. [I told him] that he had first applied to me and I would not trust or be troubled with him after a slight examination, but that I had sent him to Seward, who was then pushing forward his regulations for letters of marque, to which he knew I was opposed; and the result was Mr. Seward wanted me to take his first case, and had asked that the Assistant Secretary, Fox, should be present with Sybert. After a little further conversation, the President, instead of sending Sybert back to Seward, said he would turn him over to the Navy Department to be disposed of. This ends Mr. Seward's first application, and probably it will be the last. Knowing my views, he had gone to the President with his protégé, and knowing my views but in the hope he might have some encouragement from Fox, had requested the President to consult with Fox as well as myself. I know not that he requested me to be excluded on account of my opposition, but he requested that the Assistant Secretary should be consulted. And Fox assures me he has never swerved from my views on this subject. It is a specimen of Seward's management.

April 6, *Monday*. Great interest is felt in the result of

the Connecticut election, one of the most animated and exciting elections ever known. Issues broad and distinct. Thousands will vote for Seymour under the discipline and delusion of party who have not the remotest thought of being disloyal.

Senator Sumner called upon me this P.M. and gave a curious narrative concerning my letter to Seward on the subject of letters of marque, and of the difficulty the President had in getting it. When finally obtained, he informed and called in Sumner, and the two sat down and the President deliberately read it aloud. They then criticized it carefully, and when they were through, Sumner says the President spoke complimentarily of the letter and very complimentarily of me.

Rumors are current and thick respecting Charleston, but they are all conjectural. A movement against the place is expected about these days, but there has not been time to hear of it. I have great anxiety and great apprehension. Operations have gone on slowly and reluctantly.

The report of the "Committee on the Conduct of the War" is to-day published. This method of supervising military operations by legislative committee is of more than questionable utility. Little good can be expected of these partisan supervisors of the Government at any time. They are partisan and made up of persons not very competent to form correct and intelligent opinions of Army or Navy operations, or administrative purposes. In this instance, I think, from a slight look into a few pages, there is more truth from them than usual in these cases.

April 7, *Tuesday*. The result of the election in Connecticut yesterday is gratifying. Buckingham is reëlected Governor by three thousand majority.

The President has not returned from the Rappahannock. There was consequently no Cabinet-meeting.

Consul Dudley at Liverpool writes that he is instituting legal proceedings in the English courts against some of the

vessels which the Rebels, aided by English capital, are fitting out, but meets with discouragement or has no encouragement in unexpected quarters. Wrote Mr. Seward that the zeal of Dudley should be commended, and unless very decided measures are taken, and strong representations made, we shall be involved in difficulty. John Bull must understand that whilst we deprecate war, we don't fear him and shall not passively submit to outrage and aggression. A loan of fifteen million dollars has recently been made to the Rebels by English capitalists, which would never have been consummated had the English officials disapproved. With these means, which the Englishmen will ultimately lose, the Rebels can purchase vessels, ordnance, munitions, and prolong the war. Mercenary England will be benefited if our commerce is destroyed, and our country be weakened and exhausted. Sumner thinks the alliance with slavery will be so unpopular with the English people as to restrain the Government, but confesses he begins to have fearful misgivings.

April 8, *Wednesday*. An oppressive and anxious feeling in relation to movements at Charleston. It has been expected an attack would be made the first week in April. We hear nothing. The Rebel authorities permit their papers to publish nothing, nor will they allow the flag of truce to bring us their papers. This intensifies the desire to learn something of proceedings.

I have a telegram from the President this evening at "Headquarters near Falmouth," stating that he had a Richmond paper exchanged by the picket or scouts, and he sends me all it contains relative to operations at Charleston. Our ironclads have appeared off the bar, and the day of trial approaches.

Great results are depending on the conflicts which are taking place in these early April days. I bear up with, I believe, a fair share of composure. As regards the Navy, we have furnished Du Pont the best material of men and

ships that were ever placed under the command of any officer on this continent and, as regards officers, unequalled anywhere or at any time. Of course I have confidence he will be successful, yet so much depends on the result I am not without apprehensions. Eventuate as it may, the struggle will probably be severe and bloody. That we shall lose some vessels and some gallant fellows in getting possession of the Rebel city I have no doubt. As John Rodgers says, "somebody must be hurt."

April 9, *Thursday.* A yearning, craving desire for tidings from Charleston, but the day has passed without a word. They send us from the front that there is great repose and quiet in the Rebel camp, which is a favorable indication, for when they have successes there is immense cheering. Again I have a dispatch from the President at Headquarters this evening. He has a Richmond paper of to-day and sends me the contents. The ironclads have crossed the bar. The paper speaks with assurance, yet there are forebodings of what is to be apprehended. Says Charleston will be a Saragossa.

A desperate stand will be made at Charleston, and their defenses are formidable. Delay has given them time and warning, and they have improved them. They know also that there is no city so culpable, or against which there is such intense animosity. We shall not get the place, if we get it at all on this first trial, without great sacrifice. There are fifty-two steamers for the work and the most formidable ironclad force that ever went into battle. These great and long-delayed preparations weigh heavily upon me. As a general thing, such immense expeditions are failures. Providence delights to humble man and prostrate his strength. For months my confidence has not increased, and now that the conflict is upon us, my disquietude is greater still. I have hope and trust in Du Pont, in the glorious band of officers that are with him, and in the iron bulwarks we have furnished as well as in a righteous cause.

The President, who has often a sort of intuitive sagacity, has spoken discouragingly of operations at Charleston during the whole season. Du Pont's dispatches and movements have not inspired him with faith; they remind him, he says, of McClellan. Fox, who has more naval knowledge and experience and who is better informed of Charleston and its approaches, which he has visited, and the capabilities and efficiency of our officers and ships, entertains not a doubt of success. His reliant confidence and undoubted assurance, have encouraged and sustained me when doubtful. I do not believe the monitors impregnable, as he does, under the concentrated fire and immense weight of metal that can be thrown upon them, but it can hardly be otherwise than that some, probably that most of them, will pass Sumter. What man can do, our brave fellows will accomplish, but impossibilities cannot be overcome. We must wait patiently but not without hope.

April 10, *Friday*. The President has not yet returned. The Cabinet did not convene to-day. Affairs look uncomfortable in North Carolina. The army there needs reinforcing, and had we Charleston we would send more vessels into those waters.

Neither the War Department nor army men entertain an idea that the Rebels have withdrawn any of their forces from the Rappahannock to go into North Carolina, but I have apprehensions that such may be the case. From what quarter but that can they have collected the large force that is now pressing Foster?

We have more definite yet not wholly reliable rumors from Charleston. A contest took place on the afternoon of the 7th, Tuesday, of three hours, from two till five. Two of our vessels are reported injured, — the Keokuk, said to be sunk on Morris Island, and the Ironsides, disabled. Neither is a turret vessel. On the whole, this account, if not what we wish, is not very discouraging. The movement I judged to have been merely a reconnoissance, to feel and pioneer

the way for the grand attack. Fox persists that the ironclads are invulnerable. I shall not be surprised if some are damaged, perhaps disabled. In fact, I have supposed that some of them would probably be sunk, and shall be satisfied if we lose several and get Charleston. I hope we shall not lose them and fail to get the city.

. . . . . .

April 11, *Saturday*. The President returned from Headquarters of the Army and sent for me this A.M. Seward, Chase, Stanton, and Halleck were present, and Fox came in also. He gave particulars so far as he had collected them, not differing essentially from ours.

An army dispatch received this P.M. from Fortress Monroe says the Flambeau has arrived in Hampton Roads from Charleston; that our vessels experienced a repulse; some of the monitors were injured. The information is as confused and indefinite as the Rebel statements. Telegraphed to Admiral Lee to send the Flambeau to Washington. Let us have the dispatches.

Seward is in great trouble about the mail of the Peterhoff, a captured blockade-runner. Wants the mail given up. Says the instructions which he prepared insured the inviolability and security of the mails. I told him he had no authority to prepare such instructions, that the law was paramount, and that anything which he proposed in opposition to and disregarding the law was not observed.

He called at my house this evening with a letter from Lord Lyons inclosing dispatches from Archibald, English Consul at New York. Wanted me to send, and order the mail to be immediately given up and sent forward. I declined. Told him the mail was properly and legally in the custody of the court and beyond Executive control; assured him there would be no serious damage from delay if the mail was finally surrendered, but I was inclined to believe the sensitiveness of both Lord Lyons and Archibald had its origin in the fact that the mail contained matter

which would condemn the vessel. "But," said Seward, "mails are sacred; they are an institution." I replied that would do for peace but not for war; that he was clothed with no authority to concede the surrender of the mail; that by both statute and international law they must go to the court; that if his arrangement, of which I knew nothing, meant anything, the most that could be conceded or negotiated would be to mails on regular recognized neutral packets and not to blockade-runners and irregular vessels with contraband like the Peterhoff. He dwelt on an arrangement entered into between himself and the British Legation, and the difficulty which would follow a breach on our part. I inquired if he had any authority to make an arrangement that was in conflict with the express provisions of the statutes, — whether it was a treaty arrangement confirmed by the Senate. Told him the law and the courts must govern in this matter. The Secretary of State and the Executive were powerless. We could not interfere.

April 12, *Sunday*. An intense and anxious feeling on all hands respecting Charleston. Went early to the Department. About 11 A.M. a dispatch from the Navy Yard that the Flambeau had not arrived. The President and Stanton came in a little after noon and waited half an hour, but it was then reported the Flambeau was not yet in sight. I came home much dejected. Between 2 and 3 P.M. Commander Rhind of the Keokuk, Upshur, and Lieutenant Forrest called at my house with dispatches from Du Pont. They were not very full or satisfactory, — contained no details. He has no idea of taking Charleston by the Navy. In this I am not disappointed. He has been coming to that conclusion for months, though he has not said so. The result of this demonstration, though not a success, is not conclusive. The monitor vessels have proved their resisting power, and, but for the submarine obstructions, would have passed the forts and gone to the wharves of Charleston. This in itself is a great achievement.

Went to the Executive Mansion. Read the dispatches to and had full conversation with the President. Sumner came in and participated.

Rhind, an impulsive but brave and rash man, has lost all confidence in armored vessels. When he took command of the Keokuk his confidence was unbounded. His repulse and the loss of his vessel have entirely changed his views. It was, I apprehend, because of this change and his new appointment to armored vessels that he was sent forward with dispatches. He has, I see, been tutored. Thinks wooden vessels with great speed would do as well as ironclads. I agreed that speed was valuable, but the monitors were formidable. In this great fight the accounts speak of but a single man killed and some ten or twelve wounded. What wooden or unarmored vessels could have come out of such a fight with so few disasters. No serious injury happened to the flagship, the Ironsides, which, from some accident, did not get into the fight. We had expected Du Pont and the ironclads would pass Sumter and the forts and receive their fire, but not stop to encounter them.

Du Pont has been allowed to decide for himself in regard to proceedings, has selected, and had, the best officers and vessels in the service, and his force is in every respect picked and chosen. Perhaps I have erred in not giving him orders. Possibly the fact that he was assured all was confided to him depressed and oppressed him with the responsibility, and has prevented him from telling me freely and without reserve his doubts, apprehensions. I have for some time felt that he wanted the confidence that is essential to success. His constant call for more ironclads — for aid — has been a trial. He has been long, very long, getting ready, and finally seems to have come to a standstill, so far as I can learn from Rhind, who is, if not stampeded, disgusted, demoralized, and wholly upset. It is not fear, for he has courage, — to daring, to rashness, — and his zeal, temperament, and ardor are by nature enthusiastic. But these qualities are gone. Why Du Pont should have sent him home to

howl, or with a howl, I do not exactly understand. If it was to strengthen faith in himself and impair faith in the monitors the selection was well made. Rhind had too much confidence in his vessel before entering the harbor, and has too little in any vessel now.

April 13, *Monday.* Wrote Seward a letter on the subject of captured mails, growing out of the prize Peterhoff. On the 18th of August last I prepared a set of instructions embracing the mails, on which Seward had unwittingly got committed. The President requested that this should be done in conformity with certain arrangements which Seward had made with the foreign ministers. I objected that the instructions which Mr. Seward had prepared in consultation with the foreigners were unjust to ourselves and contrary to usage and to law, but to get clear of the difficulty they were so far modified as to not directly violate the statutes, though there remained something invidious towards naval officers which I did not like. The budget of concessions was, indeed, wholly against ourselves, and the covenants were made without any accurate knowledge on the part of the Secretary of State when they were given of what he was yielding. But the whole, in the shape in which the instructions were finally put, passed off very well. Ultimately, however, the circular containing among other matters these instructions by some instrumentality got into the papers, and the concessions were, even after they were cut down, so great that the Englishmen complimented the Secretary of State for his liberal views. The incense was so pleasant that Mr. Seward on the 30th of October wrote me a supercilious letter stating it was expedient our naval officers should forward the mails captured on blockade-runners, etc., to their destination as speedily as possible, without their being searched or opened. The tone and manner of the letter were supercilious and offensive, the concession disreputable and unwarrantable, the surrender of our indisputable rights disgraceful, and the whole thing unstates-

manlike and illegal, unjust to the Navy and the country, and discourteous to the Secretary of the Navy and the President, who had not been consulted. I said to Mr. Seward at the time, last November, that the circular of the 18th of August had gone far enough, and was yielding more than was authorized, except by legislation or treaty. He said his object was to keep the peace, to soothe and calm the English and French for a few weeks.

Lord Lyons now writes very adroitly that the seizure of the Peterhoff mails was in violation of the order of our Government as "communicated to the Secretary of the Navy on the 31st of October." He makes no claim for surrender by right, or usage, or the law of nations, but it was by the order of our Government to the Secretary of the Navy. No such order was ever given by the Government. None could be given but by law of Congress. The Secretary of the Navy does not receive orders from the Secretary of State, and though I doubt not Mr. Seward in an excitable and inflated moment promised and penned his absurd note, which he called an order when conversing with them, — gave it to them as such, — yet I never deemed it of sufficient consequence to even answer or notice further than in a conversation to tell him it was illegal.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
13 April, 1863.

SIR,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 11th inst., enclosing a note of Lord Lyons and correspondence relative to the mail of the Peterhoff.

His Lordship complains that the Peterhoff's mails were dealt with, "both at Key West and at New York in a manner which is not *in accordance with the views of the Government of the United States, as stated in your letter to the Secretary of the Navy*, of the 31st Oct. last."

Acting Rear Admiral Bailey, an extract from whose letter is enclosed, in the correspondence transmitted on the 14th ulto., gave Her Majesty's Consul at Key West an authenticated copy of the law of the United States, and of the instructions based thereon,

on the subject of papers which strictly belong to the captured vessels and the mails.

By special direction of the President, unusual courtesy and concession were made to neutrals in the instructions of the 18th August last to Naval Officers, who themselves were restricted and prohibited from examining or breaking the seals of the mail bags, parcels, &c. which they might find on board of captured vessels, under any pretext, but were authorized at their discretion to deliver them to the Consul, commanding naval officer, or the legation of the foreign government to be opened, upon the understanding that whatever is contraband, or important as evidence concerning the character of a captured vessel, will be remitted to the prize court, &c.

On the 31st of October last, I had the honor to receive from you a note suggesting the expediency of instructing naval officers that, in case of capture of merchant vessels suspected or found to be vessels of insurgents, or contraband, the public mails of every friendly or neutral power, duly certified or authenticated as such, shall not be searched or opened, but be put as speedily as may be convenient on the way to their designated destination. As I did not concur in the propriety or "expediency" of issuing instructions so manifestly in conflict with all usage and practice, and the law itself, and so detrimental to the legal rights of captors, who would thereby be frequently deprived of the best, if not the only, evidence that would insure condemnation of the captured vessel, no action was taken on the suggestions of the letter of the 31st October, as Lord Lyons seems erroneously to have supposed.

In the only brief conversation that I ever remember to have had with you, I expressed my opinion that we had in the instructions of the 18th of August gone to the utmost justifiable limit on this subject. The idea that our Naval officers should be compelled to forward the mails found on board the vessels of the insurgents — that foreign officials would have the sanction of this government in confiding their mails to blockade runners and vessels contraband, and that without judicial or other investigation, the officers of our service should hasten such mails, without examination, to their destination, was so repugnant to my own convictions that I came to the conclusion it was only a passing suggestion, and the subject was therefore dropped. Until the receipt of

your note of Saturday, I was not aware that Lord Lyons was cognizant such a note had been written.

Acting Rear Admiral Bailey has acted strictly in accordance with the law and his instructions in the matter of the Peterhoff's mail.

The dispatch of Lord Lyons is herewith returned.

I am, respectfully,
Your Obd't Serv't,
GIDEON WELLES,
Secty. of Navy.

HON. WM. H. SEWARD,
Secty. of State.

April 14, *Tuesday.*

. . . . . .

Little of interest to-day at council.

The War Department, which early in the War claimed that the armed force on the Western rivers should be subject to military control, became involved in difficulty. Naval officers, naval guns, naval men, and naval discipline were wanted and so far as could be done were given, but Congress merely ordered that the armed vessels should be transferred to the Navy. This law had given offense to the War Department, and when the transfer was made, the "ram fleet," as it was called, was withheld. This was, as I said to Stanton, in disregard of the law and would be likely to lead to difficulty, for, while there might be coöperation, there could not be separate commands without conflict.

The ram fleet was commanded by the family of Ellett, brave, venturous, intelligent engineers, not always discreet or wise, but with many daring and excellent qualities. They had under them a set of courageous and picked men, furnished by the military, styled the Marine Brigade, and did some dashing service, but refused to come under naval orders, or to recognize the Admiral in command of the Mississippi Squadron. The result was, as I anticipated might be the case, an arrest and suspension of Brigadier-General H. W. Ellett from the command of the ram fleet.

Stanton is very laudatory of the Elletts, and violent in his denunciations of Porter, whom he ridicules as a "gas bag and fussy fellow, blowing his own trumpet and stealing credit which belongs to others." There is some truth in what he says of the Elletts and also of Porter, but the latter with all his verbosity has courage and energy as well as the Elletts.

April 15, *Wednesday*. No full reports yet from Du Pont. Am pained, grieved, distressed by what I hear; and that I hear from him so little. We learn that after all our outlay and great preparations, giving him about all our force and a large portion of the best officers, he intends making no farther effort, but will abandon the plan and all attempts to take it. A fight of thirty minutes and the loss of one man, which he witnessed, satisfies the Admiral.

The Ironsides, the flagship, was suspiciously remote from the fight, yet sufficiently near to convince the Admiral he had better leave the harbor. Down to the day of the conflict I had faith in him and his ability, though grieved at his delays. When here last fall, expressly to consult and concert measures for the capture of Charleston, he was as earnest and determined as any of us, did not waver a moment, and would not listen to a suggestion of Dahlgren as an assistant.

April 16, *Thursday*. Received a singular letter from Seward respecting the mail of the Peterhoff, undertaking to set aside law, usage, principle, established and always recognized rights, under the pretense that it will not do to introduce new questions on the belligerent right of search. He has, inconsiderately and in an ostentatious attempt to put off upon the English Legation a show of power and authority which he does not possess and cannot exercise, involved himself in difficulty, conceded away the rights of his country without authority, without law, without a treaty, without equivalent; and to sustain this novel and extraor-

dinary proceeding he artfully talks about new questions in the belligerent right of search. The President has been beguiled by *ex-parte* representations and misrepresentations to indorse "approved" on Seward's little contrivance. But this question cannot be so disposed of. The President may be induced to order the mail to be given up, but the law is higher than an Executive order, and the judiciary has a duty to perform. The mail is in the custody of the court.

April 17, *Friday.* No reports from Charleston. Am in hopes that side issues and by-play on the Mississippi are about over and that there will be some concentrated action. Porter should go below Vicksburg and not remain above, thereby detaining Farragut, who is below, from great and responsible duties at New Orleans and on the Gulf. The weak and sensitive feeling of being outranked and made subordinate in command should never influence an officer in such an emergency. Porter has great vanity and great jealousy but knows his duty, and I am surprised he does not perform it. Wrote him a fortnight since a letter which he cannot misunderstand, and which will not, I hope, wound his pride.

But little was before the Cabinet, which of late can hardly be called a council. Each Department conducts and manages its own affairs, informing the President to the extent it pleases. Seward encourages this state of things. He has less active duties than others, and watches and waits on the President daily, and gathers from him the doings of his associates and often influences indirectly and not always advantageously their measures and movements, while he communicates very little, especially of that which he does not wish them to know.

Blair walked over with me from the White House to the Navy Department, and I showed him the correspondence which had taken place respecting captured mails. Understanding Seward thoroughly, as he does, he detected the sly management by which Seward first got himself in difficulty

and is now striving to get out of it. My course he pronounced correct, and he declared that the President must not be entrapped into any false step to extricate Seward, who, he says, is the least of a statesman and knows less of public law and of administrative duties than any man who ever held a seat in the Cabinet. This is a strong statement, but not so overstated as would be generally supposed. I have been surprised to find him so unpractical, so erratic, so little acquainted with the books, — he has told me more than once that he never opened them, that he was too old to study. He has, with all his bustle and activity, but little application; relies on Hunter and his clerk, Smith, perhaps Cushing also, to sustain him and hunt up his authorities; commits himself, as in the case of the mails, without knowing what he is about.

April 18, *Saturday*. Went to the President and read to him my letter of this date to Mr. Seward, on the subject of the Peterhoff mail. I have done this that the President may have both sides of the question, and understand what is being done with his "approval," without consultation with me and the members of the Cabinet in council. The Secretary of State, for reasons best known to himself, if he has any reason for his action, has advised with no one in a novel and extraordinary proceeding on his part, where he has made concessions by which our rights and interests have been given up and the law disregarded. When confronted, he, instead of entering upon investigation himself or consulting with others, has gone privately to the President, stated his own case, and got the President committed to his unauthorized acts. I therefore prepared my letter of this date, and before sending it to Mr. Seward, I deemed it best that the President should know its contents. He was surprised and very much interested; took the letter and reread it; said the subject involved questions which he did not understand, that his object was to "keep the peace," for we could not afford to take upon ourselves a war with

England and France, which was threatened if we stopped their mails; and concluded by requesting me to send my letter to Seward, who would bring the subject to his attention for further action. My object was gained. The President has "approved," without knowledge, on the representation of Seward.

April 19, *Sunday.* Several letters from Du Pont on unimportant matters, but no detailed reports of the fight from himself or officers. Advised with Fox and thought best for him to go to New York and see Admiral Gregory and Captain Rowan with a view to more effective action if necessary. Nothing certain when we shall hear from Du Pont. In the mean time it is important to prepare for an emergency.

April 20, *Monday.* Received Admiral Du Pont's detailed report with those of his officers. The document is not such as I should have expected from him a short time ago, but matters of late prevent me from feeling any real disappointment. Fox went last night to New York in anticipation of such a report. The tone and views of the sub-reports have the ring, or want of ring, of the Admiral in command. Discouragement when there should be encouragement. A pall is thrown over all. Nothing has been done, and it is the recommendation of all, from the Admiral down, that no effort be made to do anything. [Du Pont] has got his subordinates to sustain him in a proceeding that his sense of right tells him is wrong.

I am by no means confident that we are acting wisely in expending so much strength and effort on Charleston, a place of no strategic importance, but it is lamentable to witness the tone, language, absence of vitality and vigor, and want of zeal among so many of the best officers of the service. I cannot be mistaken as to the source and cause. A magnetic power in the head, which should have inspired and stimulated them, is wanting; they have been discour-

aged instead of being encouraged, depressed not strengthened.

April 21, *Tuesday*. Have another dispatch from Du Pont in answer to one I sent him on the 11th enjoining upon him to continue to menace Charleston, that the Rebel troops on that station might be detained for the present to defend the place. In some respects this dispatch is not worthy of Du Pont. He says he never advised the attack and complains of a telegram from the President more than of the dispatch from the Department. If he never advised the attack, he certainly never discouraged it, and, until since that attack, I had supposed no man in the country was more earnest on the subject than he. How have I been thus mistaken? It has been his great study for many months, the subject of his visit, of his conversation, his correspondence. When Du Pont was here last fall, Dahlgren sought, as a special favor, the privilege of taking command, under Du Pont, of the attack on Charleston, — to lead in the assault. But it was denied, for the reason that Du Pont claimed the right to perform this great work in which the whole country took so deep an interest. His correspondence since has been of this tenor, wanting more ironclads and reinforcements. Once there were indications of faltering last winter, and I promptly told him it was not required of him to go forward against his judgment. No doubtful expression has since been heard. His third dispatch since the battle brings me the first intelligence he has thought proper to communicate of an adverse character.

Only some light matters came before the Cabinet. Chase and Blair were absent. The President requested Seward and myself to remain. As soon as the others left, he said his object was to get the right of the question in relation to the seizure of foreign mails. There had evidently been an interview between him and Seward since I read my letter to him on Saturday, and he had also seen Seward's reply. But he was not satisfied. The subject was novel to him.

Mr. Seward began by stating some of the embarrassments of the present peculiar contest in which we were engaged, — the unfriendly feeling of foreign governments, the difficulty of preventing England and France from taking part with the Rebels. He dwelt at length on the subject of mail communications and mails generally, the changes which had taken place during the last fifty years; spoke of the affair of the Trent, a mail packet, of the necessity of keeping on the best terms we could with England. Said his arrangement with Mr. Stuart, who was in charge of the British Legation, had been made with the approval of the President, though he had not communicated that fact to me, etc., etc.

I stated that this whole subject belonged to the courts, which had, by law, the possession of the mail; that I knew of no right which he or even the Executive had to interfere; that I had not regarded the note of the 31st of October as more than a mere suggestion, without examination or consideration, for there had been no Cabinet consultation; that it was an abandonment of our rights and an entire subversion of the policy of our own and of all other governments, which I had not supposed any one who had looked into the matter would seriously attempt to set aside without consultation with the proper Department and advisement, indeed, with the whole Cabinet; that had there been such consultation the subject would, I was convinced, have gone no farther, for it was in conflict with our stated law and the law of nations; that this arrangement, as the Secretary of State called it, was a sort of post-treaty, by which our rights were surrendered without an equivalent, a treaty which he was not in my opinion authorized to make.

Mr. Seward said he considered the arrangement reciprocal, and if it was not expressed in words or by interchange, it was to be inferred to be the policy of England, for she would not require of us what she would not give.

I declined to discuss the question of what might be

inferred would be the future policy of England on a subject where she had been strenuous beyond any other government. I would not trust her generosity in any respect. I had no faith that she would *give* beyond what was stipulated in legible characters, nor did I believe she would, by any arrangement her Chargé might make, consent to abandon the principle recognized among nations and which she had always maintained. If this arrangement or treaty was reciprocal, it should be so stated, recorded, and universally understood. So important a change ought not and could not be made except by legislation or treaty; and if by treaty, the Senate must confirm it; if by legislation, the parliamentary bodies of both countries. There had been no such legislation, no such treaty, and I could not admit that any one Department, or the President even, could assume to make such a change.

The President thought that perhaps the Executive had some rights on this subject, but was not certain what they were, what the practice had been, what was the law, national or international. The Trent case he did not consider analogous in several respects. I had said in reply to Seward that the Trent was not a blockade-runner, but a regular mail packet, had a semi-official character, with a government officer on board in charge of the mails. The President said he wished to know the usage, — whether the public official seals or mail-bags of a neutral power were ever violated. Seward said certainly not. I maintained that the question had never been raised in regard to a captured legal prize — not a doubt expressed — and the very fact that Stuart had applied to him for mail exemption was evidence that he so understood the subject. Where was the necessity of this arrangement, or treaty, if that were not the usage? The case was plain. Our only present difficulty grew out of the unfortunate letter of the 31st of October, — the more unfortunate from the fact that it had been communicated to the British Government as the policy of our Government, while never, by any word or letter have they ever admitted

it was their policy. It is not the policy of our Government, nor is it the law of our country. Our naval commanders know of no such policy, no such usage, no such law; they have never been so instructed, nor have our district attorneys. The President, although he had affixed his name to the word "approved" in Seward's late letter, and although he neither admitted nor controverted the statement that the letter of the 31st of October was with his knowledge and approval, was a good deal "obfusticated" in regard to the merits of the question, and the proceedings of Seward, who appeared to be greatly alarmed lest we should offend England, but was nevertheless unwilling to commit himself without farther examination. He said, after frankly declaring his ignorance and that he had no recollection of the question until recently called to his notice, that he would address us interrogatories. Mr. Seward declared, under some excitement and alarm, there was not time; that Lord Lyons was importunate in his demands, claiming that the arrangement should be fulfilled in good faith. I replied that Lord Lyons, nor the British Government, had no claim whatever except the concession made by him (Seward) in his letter of the 31st of October, while there was no concession or equivalent from England.

The two letters of Seward and myself which brought about this interview, of the 18th and 20th instant respectively, are as follows: —

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
18 April, 1863.

SIR,

I have had the honor to receive your note of the 15th inst. in reference to the mails of the "Peterhoff" which are in possession of the prize court in New York. I am not aware that this Department has raised any "new questions or pretensions under the belligerent right of search," in the case of the mails of the "Peterhoff." Had there been ground for such an imputation, it could hardly, on an occasion to which so much importance has been given, have escaped the observation of Lord Lyons. He, however, advances no such charge, directly or by implication,

and founds the demand made by him exclusively on the concession which he, apparently through some knowledge of the details of your letter to me of the 31st October, had been erroneously led to believe was made by this Government, in instructions given to the commanders of its vessels of war.

The true question in the present case is, whether the administration of the law shall be suffered to take its ordinary course, or whether the Court established to administer the law, and which has certainly been in existence long enough to know its powers and duties, shall be arrested in the discharge of its functions by an order of the Executive, issued on the demand of a foreign government, which exhibits no evidence, and in fact makes no charge that law or usage has been violated on our part.

If the "Peterhoff" was captured and sent to the Prize Court without any reasonable grounds for such a proceeding, then undoubtedly the opening of the mails, if it takes place, may have been an illegal act, — but in my judgment, not otherwise. If it is to be assumed that the capture was wrongful, not only the mails but the vessel and cargo should at once be surrendered.

It may be an "unfavorable time to raise new questions or pretensions," but it is certainly no time to renounce any right or to unsettle any long and well established principles and usage. Such a surrender would be a confession of weakness which even if it existed, it would be "inexpedient and injurious" to make known to our enemies. If the case be one of doubt, it will be time enough to yield when the doubt is dispelled, and we are found to have been in the wrong. We may then yield and make amends.

I do not consider it necessary to discuss the question of genuine or spurious and simulated mails; but will merely suggest that if what pretends to be a mail is to be considered, in all cases, *prima facie* sacred, and exempt from examination, it will hereafter be found exceedingly difficult, in practice, to distinguish the spurious from the genuine, nor indeed would there be any necessity for the fabrication of a spurious mail.

In the meantime I cannot but hold that the Prize Court is lawfully in possession of the mail bag in question and that the Court itself is the proper authority to adjudge and determine what disposition shall be made of it. I propose to avoid all new questions by leaving the whole matter to this ancient method of adjustment, established by the consent of nations, and it was in order to avoid innovations, as well as to maintain our national rights and

the legal rights of the captors, that the suggestions contained in your note of the 31st October were not adopted by this Department.

I am, respectfully,
Your Obdt. Serv't,
GIDEON WELLES,
Secty. of Navy.

HON. WM. H. SEWARD,
Secty. of State.

DEP'T. OF STATE, 20th April, 1863.

HON. G. WELLES, &c.

SIR: In reply to your note of the 18th inst. on the subject of the mails of the "Peterhoff," it seems proper for me to say that when the question of detaining the public mails found on board of vessels visited and searched by the blockading forces of the U. States, was presented to this Department last year, I took the instructions of the President thereupon. Not only the note which I addressed to you on the 8th day of August last, but also the note which I addressed to you on the 31st of October last, concerning this question, was written with the approval and under the direction of the President. The views therein expressed were then communicated to the British Government by authority of the President, as defining the course of proceedings which would be pursued when such cases should occur thereafter. On receiving your note of the 13th inst., intimating a view of the policy to be pursued differing from what had thus been determined by the President on the 31st of October last, I submitted to him that note together with all the previous correspondence bearing upon the subject, together with the act of Congress to which you have called my attention. I then asked his instructions in the case of the mails of the Peterhoff. The note which I addressed to you on the 15th was the result of these instructions, and having been read and approved by him, it was transmitted to you by his direction. I was also directed to communicate the contents thereof to the Dist. Attorney of the U. S. for the Southern District of New York, and also to announce to Lord Lyons, for the information of the British Government, that the mails of the "Peterhoff" would be forwarded to their destination. I was also directed by the President to make some special representations to the British Government on the general subject of the mails of neutrals, which are now in preparation.

I need hardly say that no part of my note of the 15th instant

was intended or was understood by me as imputing to you the having raised or being disposed to raise new questions. What was said on that subject, was said by way of showing that a course of proceedings different from what I was recommending, would involve, on the part of this Government, the raising of a question which had been waived by it in my correspondence with the British Government in October last.

I have the honor to be &c.

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

April 22, *Wednesday.* Admiral Bailey writes — and I have similar information from other sources — that an immense trade has sprung up on the Rio Grande; that there are at this time from one hundred and eighty to two hundred vessels off the mouth of that river, when before the War there were but six to eight at any one time. Ostensibly the trade is with the little city of Matamoras, but it is notoriously a Rebel traffic. Goods are received and cotton exported by this route under our own as well as foreign flags. I have suggested in one or two conversations with Mr. Seward that it was a favorable opportunity to establish some principle of international law relative to the rights and obligations of adjoining countries having a mutual highway, as the United States and Mexico have in the Rio Grande; that we should require Mexico to prevent this illicit traffic, or that they should permit us to prevent it; but Seward is not disposed to grapple the question, is afraid it will compromise us with the French, says Mexico is feeble, dislikes to make exactions of her, etc., etc. I yesterday wrote the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of War in regard to this illicit trade. Our own countrymen should not have ready clearances and facilities for this traffic, and it may be necessary to establish frontier military posts to prevent it. Perhaps my letters may cause the subject to be taken up in the Cabinet, and lead the Government to adopt some preventive measure; if not, the blockade will be evaded and rendered ineffectual. The Peterhoff with its mail and contraband cargo was one of

a regular line of English steamers, established to evade the blockade by way of Matamoras.

Received the President's letter and interrogatories concerning the mail. The evening papers state that the mail of the Peterhoff has been given up by District Attorney Delafield Smith, who applied to the court under direction of the Secretary of State, "approved" by the President. It is a great error, which has its origin in the meddlesome disposition and loose and inconsiderate action of Mr. Seward, who has meddlesomely committed himself. Having in a weak moment conceded away an incontestable national right, he has sought to extricate himself, not by retracing his steps, but by involving the President, who confides in him and over whom he has, at times, an unfortunate influence. The interference with the judiciary, which has admiralty jurisdiction, is improper, and the President is one of the very last men who would himself intrude on the rights or prerogatives of any other Department of the Government, one of the last also to yield a national right. In this instance, and often, he has deferred his better sense and judgment to what he thinks the superior knowledge of the Secretary of State, who has had greater experience, has been Senator and Governor of the great State of New York, and is a lawyer and politician of repute and standing. But while Mr. Seward has talents and genius, he has not the profound knowledge nor the solid sense, correct views, and unswerving right intentions of the President, who would never have committed the egregious indiscretion, mistake, of writing such a letter, and making such a concession as the letter of the 31st of October; or, if he could have committed such an error, or serious error of any kind, he would not have hesitated a moment to retrace his steps and correct it; but that is the difference between Abrabam Lincoln and William H. Seward.

I have set Watkins[1] and Eames[2] to ransack the books.

[1] A clerk in the Navy Department.
[2] Charles Eames, a well-known admiralty lawyer of Washington.

Upton[1] must help them. I want the authorities that I may respond to the President. Though his sympathies are enlisted for Seward, who is in difficulty, and I have no doubt he will strive to relieve him and shield the State Department, we must, however, have law, usage, right respected and maintained. The mail of the Peterhoff is given up, but that is not law, and the law must be sustained if the Secretary of State is humiliated.

The Philadelphians are fearful the acceptance of League Island will not be consummated, and have written me. I have replied that there is a courtesy and respect due to Congress which I cannot disregard.

April 23, *Thursday*. Favorable, though not very important, news from lower Virginia and North Carolina.

My letter of the 2d and telegram of the 15th to Porter have been effective. The steamers have run past Vicksburg, and I hope we may soon have something favorable from that quarter.

Senator Sumner called this P.M. to talk over the matter of the Peterhoff mail. Says he has been examining the case, that he fully indorses my views. Seward, he avers, knows nothing of international law and is wanting in common sense, treats grave questions lightly and without comprehending their importance and bearings. He calls my attention to the opinion of Attorney-General Wirt as to the rights of the judiciary.

April 24, *Friday*. Little of importance at the Cabinet-meeting. Seward left early. He seemed uneasy, and I thought was apprehensive I might bring up the subject of the Peterhoff mails. It suits him better to have interviews with the President alone than with a full Cabinet, especially on points where he knows himself wrong. I did not feel particularly anxious that the subject should be intro-

[1] Francis H. Upton, counsel for the captors of the Peterhoff and in other prize cases during the War.

duced to-day, for I am not fully prepared with my reply, though busily occupied on the subject-matter, giving it every moment I can spare from pressing current business.

April 27, *Monday.* Finished and gave to the President my letter on the subject of mails on captured vessels. It has occupied almost every moment of my time for a week, aided by Eames, Watkins, and Upton, and by suggestions from Sumner, who has entered earnestly into the subject.

The President was alone when I called on him with the document, which looked formidable, filling thirty-one pages of foolscap. He was pleased and interested, not at all discouraged by my paper; said he should read every word of it, that he wanted to understand the question, etc. He told me Seward had sent in his answer this morning, but it was in some respects not satisfactory, particularly as regarded the Adela. He had sent for Hunter, who, however, did not understand readily the case, or what was wanted.

April 28, *Tuesday.* Nothing at Cabinet, Seward and Chase absent. The President engaged in selecting provost-marshals.

Sumner called this evening at the Department. Was much discomfited with an interview which he had last evening with the President. The latter was just filing a paper as Sumner went in. After a few moments Sumner took two slips from his pocket, — one cut from the *Boston Transcript*, the other from the *Chicago Tribune*, each taking strong ground against surrendering the Peterhoff mail. The President, after reading them, opened the paper he had just filed and read to Sumner his letter addressed to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Navy. He told Sumner he had received the replies and just concluded reading mine. After some comments on them he said to Sumner, "I will not show these papers to you now; perhaps I never shall." A conversation then took place which

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greatly mortified and chagrined Sumner, who declares the President is very ignorant or very deceptive. The President, he says, is horrified, or appeared to be, with the idea of a war with England, which he assumed depended on this question. He was confident we should have war with England if we presumed to open their mail bags, or break their seals or locks. They would not submit to it, and we were in no condition to plunge into a foreign war on a subject of so little importance in comparison with the terrible consequences which must follow our act. Of this idea of a war with England, Sumner could not dispossess him by argument, or by showing its absurdity. Whether it was real or affected ignorance, Sumner was not satisfied.

I have no doubts of the President's sincerity, and so told Sumner. But he has been imposed upon, humbugged, by a man in whom he confides. His confidence has been abused; he does not — frankly confesses he does not — comprehend the principles involved nor the question itself. Seward does not intend he shall comprehend it. While attempting to look into it, the Secretary of State is daily, and almost hourly, wailing in his ears the calamities of a war with England which he is striving to prevent. The President is thus led away from the real question, and will probably decide it, not on its merits, but on this false issue, raised by the man who is the author of the difficulty.

April 29, *Wednesday*. The atmosphere is thick with rumors of army movements. Hooker is reported to have crossed the river. Not unlikely a portion of his force has done so, and all may. That there may be a battle imminent is not improbable. I shall not be surprised, however, if only smart skirmishes take place.

Admiral Lee writes me that in his opinion there is no such force in Suffolk as Dix and others represent. General Dix, like most of our generals, cries aloud for gunboats and naval protection, but is not inclined to be grateful, or even just to his defenders.

April 30, *Thursday.* To-day has been designated for a National Fast. I listened to a patriotic Christian discourse from my pastor, Mr. Pine.

Had a long, studied, complaining letter from Admiral Du Pont, of some twenty pages, in explanation and refutation of a letter in the *Baltimore American*, which criticizes and censures his conduct at Charleston. The dispatch is no credit to Du Pont, who could be better employed. He is evidently thinking much more of Du Pont than of the service or the country. I fear he can be no longer useful in his present command, and am mortified and vexed that I did not earlier detect his vanity and weakness. They have lost us the opportunity to take Charleston, which a man of more daring energy and who had not a distinguished name to nurse and take care of would have improved. All Du Pont's letters since the 8th show that he had no heart, no confidence, no zeal in his work; that he went into the fight with a predetermined conviction it would not be a success. He is prejudiced against the monitor class of vessels, and would attribute his failure to them, but it is evident he has no taste for rough, close fighting.

Senator Sumner called on me this P.M. in relation to the coast defense of Massachusetts. I received a letter from Governor Andrew this A.M. on the same subject. The President had also been to see me in regard to it.

After disposing of that question, Sumner related an interesting conversation which he had last evening with Lord Lyons at Tassara's, the Spanish Minister. I was an hour or two at Tassara's party, in the early part of the evening, and observed S. and Lord L. in earnest conversation. Sumner says their whole talk was on the subject of the mails on captured vessels. He opened the subject by regretting that in the peculiar condition of our affairs, Lord Lyons should have made a demand that could not be yielded without national dishonor; said that the question was one of judicature rather than diplomacy. Lord Lyons disavowed ever having made a demand; said he was cautious

and careful in all his transactions with Mr. Seward, that he made it a point to reduce all matters with Seward of a public nature to writing, that he had done so in regard to the mail of the Peterhoff, and studiously avoided any demand. He authorized Sumner, who is Chairman of Foreign Relations, to see all his letters in relation to the mails, etc., etc.

To-day Sumner saw the President and repeated to him this conversation, Lord Lyons having authorized him to do so. The President, he says, seemed astounded, and after some general conversation on the subject, said in his emphatic way, "I shall have to cut this knot."

VIII

Conversation with Attorney-General Bates on the Captured Mails — John Laird's Statement in Parliament — Waiting for News from Hooker — Rumors of the Battle of Chancellorsville — Disappointment at the News — Stonewall Jackson's Death — Recall of Wilkes from the West India Squadron — Earl Russell's Speech on American Affairs — Sumner's Talk with Seward about Mr. Adams and the Secretary of Legation at London — Conversation with the President on the Subject of Captured Mails — Du Pont's Charges against Chief Engineer Stimers — Du Pont before Charleston — His Shortcomings and the Question of superseding him — Deplorable Conditions in the South — Foote succeeds Du Pont in Command of the South Atlantic Squadron — Dahlgren declines to be Second in Command.

May 1, *Friday*. After Cabinet-meeting walked over with Attorney-General Bates to his office. Had a very full talk with him concerning the question of captured mails, — the jurisdiction of the courts, the law, and usage, and rights of the Government. He is unqualifiedly with me in my views and principles, — the law and our rights. He dwelt with some feeling on the courtesy which ought to exist between the several Departments and was by them generally observed. Although cautious and guarded in his remarks, he did not conceal his dissatisfaction with the conduct of the Secretary of State in writing to attorneys and marshals, and assuming to instruct and direct them in their official duties which were assigned to and required by law to be done by the Attorney-General.

We are getting vague rumors of army operations, but nothing intelligible or reliable.

May 2, *Saturday*. Thick rumors concerning the Army of the Potomac, — little, however, from official sources. I abstain from going to the War Department more than is necessary or consulting operators at the telegraph, for

there is a hazy uncertainty there. This indefiniteness, and the manner attending it, is a pretty certain indication that the information received is not particularly gratifying. Whether Hooker refuses to communicate, and prevents others from communicating, I know not. Other members of the Cabinet, like myself, are, I find, disinclined to visit the War Department under the circumstances.

A very singular declaration by John Laird, Member of Parliament and one of the builders of the pirate Alabama, has been shown. Laird said in Parliament, in reply to Thomas Baring, that the Navy Department had applied to him to build vessels. It is wholly untrue, a sheer fabrication. But John Laird writes to Howard of New York, that he (Howard) had said something to him (Laird) about building vessels for the Government. Howard, I judge, was Laird's agent or broker to procure, if possible, contracts for him or his firm, but did [not] succeed. The truth is, our own shipbuilders, in consequence of the suspension of work in private yards early in the war, were clamorous for contracts, and the competition was such that we would have had terrible indignation upon us had we gone abroad for vessels, which I never thought of doing.

May 4, *Monday.* Great uneasiness and uncertainty prevail in regard to army movements. I think the War Department is really poorly advised of operations. I could learn nothing from them yesterday or to-day. Such information as I have is picked up from correspondents and newsgatherers, and from naval officers who arrive from below.

I this P.M. met the President at the War Department. He said he had a feverish anxiety to get facts; was constantly up and down, for nothing reliable came from the front. There is an impression, which is very general, that our army has been successful, but that there has been great slaughter and that still fiercer and more terrible fights are impending.

I am not satisfied. If we have success, the tidings would

come to us in volumes. We may not be beaten. Stoneman[1] with 13,000 cavalry and six days' supply has cut his way into the enemy's country, but we know not his fate, farther than we hear nothing from him or of him. If overwhelmed, we should know it from the Rebels. There are rumors that the Rebels again reoccupy the intrenchments on the heights in the rear of Fredericksburg, but the rumor is traceable to no reliable source.

May 5, Tuesday. But little of importance at the Cabinet. The President read a brief telegram which he got last evening from General Hooker, to whom, getting nothing from the War Department, he had applied direct to ascertain whether the Rebels were in possession of the works on the heights of Fredericksburg. Hooker replied he believed it was true, but if so it was of no importance. This reply communicates nothing of operations, but the tone and whole thing — even its brevity — inspire right feelings. It is strange, however, that no reliable intelligence reaches us from the army of what it is doing, or not doing. This fact itself forebodes no good.

Sumner came in this afternoon and read to me from two or three documents — one the late speech of the Solicitor of the Treasury in the British Parliament on the matter of prize and prize courts — which are particularly favorable to our views in the Peterhoff case. From this we got on to the absorbing topic of the army under Hooker. Sumner is hopeful, and if he did not inspire me with his confidence, I was made glad by his faith. The President came in while we were discussing the subject, and, as is his way, at once earnestly participated. His suggestions and inferences struck me as probable, hopeful, nothing more. Like the rest of us, he wants facts; without them we have only sur-

[1] General George Stoneman was conducting an extensive cavalry operation intended to cut off Lee's army after its expected defeat. The unlooked-for discomfiture of the Federal forces placed Stoneman in considerable danger, but he succeeded in rejoining Hooker's main army on May 1st.

mises and surmises indicate doubt, uncertainty. He is not informed of occurrences as he should be, but is in the dark, with no official data, which confirms me in the belief that the War Department is in ignorance, for they would not withhold favorable intelligence from him, yet it is strange, very strange. In the absence of news the President strives to feel encouraged and to inspire others, but I can perceive he has doubts and misgivings, though he does not express them. Like my own, perhaps, his fears are the result of absence of facts, rather than from any information received.

May 6, *Wednesday*. We have news, via Richmond, that Stoneman has destroyed bridges and torn up rails on the Richmond road, thus cutting off communication between that city and the Rebel army. Simultaneously with this intelligence, there is a rumor that Hooker has recrossed the river and is at Falmouth. I went to the War Department about noon to ascertain the facts, but Stanton said he had no such intelligence nor did he believe it. I told him I had nothing definite or very authentic, — that he certainly ought to be better posted than I could be, — but I had seen a brief telegram from young Dahlgren, who is on Hooker's staff, dated this A.M., "Headquarters near Falmouth — All right." This to me was pretty significant of the fact that Hooker and his army had recrossed. Stanton was a little disconcerted. He said Hooker had as yet no definite plan; his headquarters are not far from Falmouth. Of course nothing farther was to be said, yet I was by no means satisfied with his remarks or manner.

An hour later Sumner came into my room, and raising both hands exclaimed, "Lost, lost, all is lost!" I asked what he meant. He said Hooker and his army had been defeated and driven back to this side of the Rappahannock. Sumner came direct from the President, who, he said, was extremely dejected. I told him I had been apprehensive that disaster had occurred, but when I asked under what

circumstances this reverse had taken place, he could give me no particulars.

I went soon after to the War Department. Seward was sitting with Stanton, as when I left him two or three hours before. I asked Stanton if he knew where Hooker was. He answered, curtly, "No." I looked at him sharply, and I have no doubt with incredulity, for he, after a moment's pause, said, "He is on this side of the river, but I know not where." "Well," said I, "he is near his old quarters, and I wish to know if Stoneman is with him, or if he or you know anything of that force." Stanton said he had no information in regard to that force, and it was one of the most unpleasant things of the whole affair that Hooker should have abandoned Stoneman.

Last night and to-day we have had a violent rainstorm from the northeast. Fox and Edgar, my son, left this A.M. for Falmouth. The President, uneasy, uncomfortable, and dissatisfied with the meagre information and its gloomy aspect, went himself this evening to the army with General Halleck.

May 7, *Thursday.* Our people, though shocked and very much disappointed, are in better tone and temper than I feared they would be. The press had wrought the public mind to high expectation by predicting certain success, which all wished to believe. I have not been confident, though I had hopes. Hooker has not been tried in so high and responsible a position. He is gallant and efficient as commander of a division, but I am apprehensive not equal to that of General-in-Chief. I have not, however, sufficient data for a correct and intelligent opinion. A portion of his plan seems to have been well devised, and his crossing the river well executed. It is not clear that his position at Chancellorsville was well selected, and he seems not to have been prepared for Stonewall Jackson's favorite plan of attack. Our men fought well, though it seems not one half of them were engaged. I do not learn why Stoneman was left,

or why Hooker recrossed the river without hearing from him, or why he recrossed at all.

It is not explained why Sedgwick and his command were left single-handed to fight against greatly superior numbers — the whole army of Lee in fact — on Monday, when Hooker with all his forces was unemployed only three miles distant. There are, indeed, many matters which require explanation.

May 8, *Friday.* A telegraph dispatch this morning from Admiral Porter states he has possession of Grand Gulf. The news was highly gratifying to the President, who had not heard of it until I met him at the Cabinet-meeting.

Several of our navy and army officers arrived this day from Richmond, having left that place on Tuesday to be exchanged. They all say that Richmond might have been captured by Stoneman's cavalry, or by a single regiment, the city had been so thoroughly drained of all its male population to reinforce Lee, and so wholly unprepared were they for a raid that but little resistance could have been made. Stoneman and his force have done gallant service, but we regret they did not dash into Richmond and capture Davis and the Rebel Administration.

Commander Drayton came to see me to-day. He is one of Du Pont's intimates, a man of excellent sense and heart, but is impressed with Du Pont's opinions and feelings. All of Du Pont's set — those whom he has called around him — are schooled and trained, and have become his partisans, defer to his views, and adopt his sentiments. It is his policy, and of course theirs, to decry the monitors as if that would justify or exonerate Du Pont from any remissness or error. I told Drayton it was not necessary to condemn the monitors for the failure to capture Charleston, nor did it appear to me wise to do so, or to make any deficiencies in those vessels prominent in the official reports which were to be published. It seems an effort to impute blame somewhere, or [as] if blame existed and an

excuse or justification was necessary, of which the public and the whole world should be at once informed. If the monitors are weak in any part, there was no necessity for us to proclaim that weakness to our enemies; if they needed improvements, the Government could make them. Alluding to Du Pont's long dispatch refuting, explaining, and deprecating the criticism in a Baltimore paper, I told him I was sorry to see such an expenditure of time, talent, and paper by the commander of the Squadron and his subordinates. Drayton expressed his regret at the over-sensitiveness of Du Pont, but said it was his nature, and this morbid infirmity was aggravated by his long continuance on shipboard. It is the opinion of Drayton that Charleston cannot be taken by the Navy and that the Navy can do but little towards it. He says the monitors, though slow, would have passed the batteries and reached the wharves of Charleston but for submerged obstructions.

May 11, *Monday.* The President sent a note to my house early this morning, requesting me to call at the Executive Mansion on my way to the Department. When there he took from a drawer two dispatches written by the Secretary of State to Lord Lyons, in relation to prize captures. As they had reference to naval matters, he wished my views in regard to them and the subject-matter generally. I told him these dispatches were not particularly objectionable, but that Mr. Seward in these matters seemed not to have a correct apprehension of the duties and rights of the Executive and other Departments of the Government. There were, however, in this correspondence allusions to violations of international law and of instructions which were within his province, and which it might be well to correct; but as a general thing it would be better that the Secretary of State and the Executive should not, unless necessary, interfere in these matters, but leave them where they properly and legally belonged, with the judiciary. [I said] that Lord Lyons

would present these demands or claims as long as the Executive would give them consideration, — acquiesced, responded, and assumed to grant relief, — but that it was wholly improper, and would, besides being irregular, cause him and also the State and Navy Departments great labor which does not belong to either. The President said he could see I was right, but that in this instance, perhaps, it would be best, if I did not seriously object, that these dispatches should go on; but he wished me to see them.

When I got to the Department, I found a letter from Mr. Seward, inclosing one from Lord Lyons stating that complaint had been made to his Government that passengers on the Peterhoff had been imprisoned and detained, and were entitled to damages. As the opportunity was a good one, I improved it to communicate to him in writing, what I have repeatedly done in conversation, that in the present state of the proceedings there should be no interference on his part, that these are matters for adjudication by the courts rather than for diplomacy or Executive action, and until the judicial power is exhausted, it is not advisable for the Departments to interfere, etc. The letter was not finished in season to be copied to-day, but I will get it to him to-morrow, I hope in season for him to read before getting off his dispatches.

May 12, *Tuesday.* We have information that Stonewall Jackson, one of the best generals in the Rebel, and, in some respects, perhaps in either, service, is dead. One cannot but lament the death of such a man, in such a cause too. He was fanatically earnest, and a Christian but bigoted soldier.

A Mr. Prentiss has presented a long document to the President for the relief of certain parties who owned the John Gilpin, a vessel loaded with cotton, and captured and condemned as good prize. There has been a good deal of outside engineering in this case. Chase thought if the parties were loyal it was a hard case. I said all such losses

were hard, and asked whether it was hardest for the wealthy, loyal owners, who undertook to run the blockade with their cotton, or the brave and loyal sailors who made the capture and were by law entitled to the avails, to be deprived. I requested him to say which of these parties should be the losers. He did not answer. I added this was another of those cases that belonged to the courts exclusively, with which the Executive ought not to interfere. All finally acquiesced in this view.

This case has once before been pressed upon the President. Senator Foot of Vermont appeared with Mr. Prentiss, and the President then sent for me to ascertain its merits. I believe I fully satisfied him at that time, but his sympathies have again been appealed to by one side.

Mr. Seward came to my house last evening and read a confidential dispatch from Earl Russell to Lord Lyons, relative to threatened difficulties with England and the unpleasant condition of affairs between the two countries. He asked if anything could be done with Wilkes, whom he has hitherto favored, but against whom the Englishmen, without any sufficient cause, are highly incensed. I told him he might be transferred to the Pacific, which is as honorable but a less active command; that he had favored Wilkes, who was not one of the most comfortable officers for the Navy Department. I was free to say, however, I had seen nothing in his conduct thus far, in his present command, towards the English deserving of censure, and that the irritation and prejudice against him were unworthy, yet under the peculiar condition of things, it would perhaps be well to make this concession. I read to him an extract from a confidential letter of J. M. Forbes, now in England, a most earnest and sincere Union man, urging that W. should be withdrawn, and quoting the private remarks of Mr. Cobden to that effect. I had read the same extract to the President last Friday evening, Mr. Sumner being present. He (Sumner) remarked it was singular, but that he had called on the President to read to him

a letter which he had just received from the Duke of Argyle, in which he advised that very change. This letter Sumner has since read to me. It is replete with good sense and good feeling.

I have to-day taken preliminary steps to transfer Wilkes and to give Bell command in the West Indies. It will not surprise me if this, besides angering Wilkes, gives public discontent. His strange course in taking Slidell and Mason from the Trent was popular, and is remembered with gratitude by the people, who are not aware his work was but half done, and that, by not bringing in the Trent as prize, he put himself and the country in the wrong. Seward at first approved the course of Wilkes in capturing Slidell and Mason, and added to my embarrassment in so disposing of the question as not to create discontent by rebuking Wilkes for what the country approved. But when, under British menace, Seward changed his position, he took my position, and the country gave him great credit for what was really my act and the undoubted law of the case. My letter congratulating Wilkes on the capture of the Rebel enemies was particularly guarded and warned him and naval officers against a similar offense. The letter was acceptable to all parties, — the Administration, the country, and even Wilkes was contented.

It is best under the circumstances that Wilkes should be withdrawn from the West Indies, where he was sent by Seward's special request, unless, as he says, we are ready for a war with England. I sometimes think that is not the worst alternative, she behaves so badly.

May 13, *Wednesday.* The last arrival from England brings Earl Russell's speech on American affairs. Its tone and views are less offensive than some things we have had, and manifest a dawning realization of what must follow if England persists in her unfriendly policy. In his speech, Earl R., in some remarks relative to the opinions of the law officers of the Crown on the subject of mails captured

on blockade-runners, adroitly quotes the letter of Seward to me on the 31st of October, and announces that to be the policy of the United States Government, and the regulation which governs our naval officers. It is not the English policy, nor a regulation which they adopt, reciprocate, or respect, but the tame, flat concession of the Secretary of State, made without authority or law. The statement of Earl R. is not correct. No such orders as he represents have issued from the Navy Department. Not a naval officer or district attorney has ever been instructed to surrender the mails as stated, nor is there a court in the United States which would regard such instructions, if given, as good law. It is nothing more nor less than an attempted abandonment, an ignominious surrender, of our undoubted legal rights by a Secretary of State who knew not what he was about. The President may, under the influence of Mr. Seward, commit himself to this inconsiderate and illegal proceeding and direct such instructions to be issued, but if so, the act shall be his, not mine, and he will find it an unhappy error.

But Seward has been complimented in Parliament for giving away to our worst enemy his country's rights, — for an impertinent and improper intermeddling, or attempt to intermeddle, with and direct the action of another Department, and the incense which he has received will tickle his vanity.

Sumner tells me of a queer interview he had with Seward. The first part of the conversation was harmonious and related chiefly to the shrewd and cautious policy and management of the British Ministry, who carefully referred all complex questions to the law officers of Her Majesty's Government. It might have been a hint to Seward to be more prudent and considerate, and to take legal advice instead of pushing on, wordy and slovenly, as is sometimes done. Allusion was made to Mr. Adams and his unfortunate letter to Zerman.[1] Our Minister,

[1] Zerman was a Mexican in partnership with Howell, an American.

Mr. Adams, was spoken of as too reserved and retiring for his own and the general good. Sumner said, in justification and by way of excuse for him, that it would be pleasanter and happier for him if he had a Secretary of Legation whose deportment, manner, and social position were different, — if he were more affable and courteous, in short more of a gentleman, — for he could in that case make up for some of Mr. A.'s deficiencies. At this point Seward flew into a passion, and, in a high key, told Sumner he knew nothing of political (meaning party) claims and services, and accused him of a design to cut the throat of Charley Wilson, the Secretary of Legation at London. Sumner wholly disclaimed any such design or any personal knowledge of the man, but said he had been informed, and had no doubt of the fact, that it was the daily practice of Wilson to go to Morley's, seat himself in a conspicuous place, throw his legs upon the table, and, in coarse language, abuse England and the English. Whatever might be our grievances and wrong, this, Sumner thought, was not a happy method of correcting them, nor would such conduct on the part of the second officer of the Legation bring about kinder feelings or a better state of things, whereas a true gentleman could by suavity and dignity in such a position win respect, strengthen his principal, and benefit the country. These remarks only made Seward more violent, and louder in his declarations that Charley Wilson was a clever fellow and should be sustained.

I read to Attorney-General Bates the letters and papers in relation to mails on captured vessels, of which he had some previous knowledge. He complimented my letters and argument, and said my position was impregnable and the Secretary of State wholly and utterly wrong.

The firm fitted out a vessel to trade with Matamoras. Mr. Adams, being satisfied of their good faith, gave them assurances of immunity from interference on the part of the United States Navy, and this discrimination against Englishmen engaged ostensibly in the same trade, was sharply criticized in the British Parliament.

Mr. Seward sent me to-day a letter from Lord Lyons concerning the Mont Blanc and the Dolphin, and wished me to name some person at Key West to arbitrate on the former case, the vessel having been restored and the parties wanting damages. I named Admiral Bailey for this naval duty, but took occasion to reiterate views I have heretofore expressed, and especially in my letter yesterday that these matters belonged to the courts and not to the Departments.

Hear of no new move by Hooker. I am apprehensive our loss in killed and prisoners was much greater in the late battle than has been supposed.

May 14, *Thursday.* I wrote, two or three weeks since, a letter to Admiral Du Pont of affairs at Charleston and his reports, but have delayed sending it, partly in hopes I should have something suggestive and encouraging, partly because Fox requested me to wait, in the belief we should have additional information. Du Pont is morbidly sensitive, and to vindicate himself wants to publish every defect and weakness of the ironclads and to disparage them, regardless of its effect in inspiring the Rebels to resist them, and impairing the confidence of our own men in their invulnerability. I have tried to be kind and frank in my letter, but shall very likely give offense.

Had a little conversation to-day with Chase and Bates on two or three matters, but the principal subject was Earl Russell's speech.

May 15, *Friday.* The President called on me this morning with the basis of a dispatch which Lord Lyons proposed to send home. He had submitted it to Mr. Seward, who handed it to the President, and he brought it to me. The President read it to me, and when he concluded, I remarked the whole question of the mails belonged properly to the courts and I thought unless we proposed some new treaty arrangement it would be best the subject

should continue with the courts as law and usage directed. "But," he inquired, "have the courts ever opened the mails of a neutral government?" I replied, "Always, when the captured vessels on which mails were found were considered good prize." "Why, then," said he, "do you not furnish me with the fact? It is what I want, but you furnish me with no report that any neutral has ever been searched." I said I was not aware that the right had ever been questioned. The courts made no reports to me whether they opened or did not open mail. The courts are independent of the Departments, to which they are not amenable. In the mails was often the best and only evidence that could insure condemnation. [I said] that I should as soon have expected an inquiry whether evidence was taken, witnesses sworn, and the cargoes examined as whether mails were examined. "But if mails ever are examined," said he, "the fact must be known and recorded. What vessels," he asked, "have we captured, where we have examined the mails?" "All, doubtless, that have had mails on board," I replied. Probably most of them were not intrusted with mails. "What," asked he, "was the first vessel taken?" "I do not recollect the name, a small blockade-runner, I think; I presume she had no mail. If she had, I have no doubt the court searched it and examined all letters and papers." He was extremely anxious to ascertain if I recollected, or knew that any captured mail had been searched. I told him I remembered no specific mention, doubted if the courts ever reported to the Navy Department. Foreign governments, knowing of the blockade, would not be likely to make up mails for the ports blockaded. The Peterhoff had a mail ostensibly for Matamoras, which was her destination, but with a cargo and mails which we knew were intended for the Rebels, though the proof might be difficult since the mail had been given up. I sent for Watkins, who has charge of prize matters, to know if there was any record or mention of mails in any of the papers sent the Navy Department,

but he could not call to mind anything conclusive. Some mention was made of mails or dispatches in the mail on board the Bermuda, which we captured, but it was incidental. Perhaps the facts might be got from the district attorneys, though he thought, as I did, that but few regular mails were given to blockade-runners. The President said he would frame a letter to the district attorneys, and in the afternoon he brought in a form to be sent to the attorneys in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston.

Read Chase the principal points in the Peterhoff case. He approved of my views, concurred in them fully, and said there was no getting around them.

May 16, *Saturday*. Saw Seward this morning respecting Wilkes. After talking over the subject, he said he cared nothing about Wilkes, that if he was removed he would be made a martyr, and both he (S.) and myself would be blamed and abused by the people, who knew not the cause that influenced and governed us. He then for the first time alluded to the removal of Butler, which he said was a necessity to appease France. Nevertheless France was not satisfied, yet Butler's removal had occasioned great discontent and called down much censure. If I could stand the recall of Wilkes, he thought he could. I answered him that any abuse of me in the discharge of my duty and when I knew I was right would never influence my course. In this case I could better stand his recall than the responsibility of sending him into the Pacific, where he would have great power and be the representative of the Government; for he is erratic, impulsive, opinionated, somewhat arbitrary towards his subordinates, and is always disinclined to obey orders which he receives if they do not comport with his own notions. His special mission, in his present command, had been to capture the Alabama. In this he had totally failed, while zealous to catch blockade-runners and get prize money. Had he not been in the West Indies, we might have captured her, but he had seized the Vander-

bilt, which had specific orders and destination and gone off with her prize-hunting, thereby defeating our plans. Seward wished me to detach him because he had not taken the Alabama and give that as the reason. I care to assign no reasons, — none but the true ones, and it is not politic to state them.

When I was about leaving, Seward asked as a favor that I would address him a proposition that the matter of the Mont Blanc should be left to Admiral Bailey alone. The whole pecuniary interest involved did not, he said, exceed six or eight hundred dollars, and it would greatly relieve him at a pinch, if I would do him this favor, and harm no one, for the vessel had been seized sleeping at anchor within a mile of the Cays, and was retained by the court. I asked what he had to do with it anyway. He gave me no satisfactory answer, but went into the trouble he had in keeping the Englishmen quiet and his present difficulties. All of which, I take it, means he has loosely committed himself, meddled with what was none of his business, made inconsiderate promises to Lord Lyons, and wishes me, who have had nothing to do with it, but have objected to the whole proceeding, to now propose that Admiral Bailey shall be sole referee. This will enable him to cover up his own error and leave it to be inferred that I have prompted it, as B. is a naval officer.

May 18, *Monday*. Sumner called this evening and read to me a letter he had received from Mr. Cobden and also one from Mr. Bright, — both in good tone and of right feeling. These two men are statesmen and patriots in the true sense of the word, such as do honor to England and give vigor to the Government. They and Sumner have done much to preserve the peace of the two countries.

Senator Doolittle came to see me to-day. Has faith, he says, but fears that General Hooker has no religious faith, laments the infirmities of that officer, and attributes our

late misfortune to the want of godliness in the commanding general.

May 19, *Tuesday.* The case of Vallandigham, recently arrested by General Burnside, tried by court martial, convicted of something, and sentenced to Fort Warren, was before the Cabinet. It was an error on the part of Burnside. All regretted the arrest, but, having been made, every one wished he had been sent over the lines to the Rebels with whom he sympathizes. Until the subject is legitimately before us, and there is a necessity to act, there is no disposition to meddle with the case.

The *New York Tribune* of to-day has a communication on the Peterhoff mail question. It is neither so good nor so bad as it might have been. Am sorry to see it just at this time, and uncertain as to the author. Faxon names one of the correspondents of the *Tribune*, but while he may have forwarded the article he could not have written it.

Governor Sprague and Miss Kate Chase called this evening. I have been skeptical as to a match, but this means something. She is beautiful, or, more properly perhaps, interesting and impressive. He is rich and holds the position of Senator. Few young men have such advantages as he, and Miss Kate has talents and ambition sufficient for both.

I wrote and sent to Senator Sumner a denial of John Laird's statement in the British House of Commons. When he asserted that the Secretary of the American Navy, or the agent of the Secretary, applied to him to build vessels, or a vessel, he asserted what is not true, what he knows to be untrue. He is, in my opinion, a mercenary hypocrite without principle or honesty, as his words and works both show.

May 20, *Wednesday.* Admiral Lee has been here for two or three days consulting in regard to Wilmington. The blockade of Cape Fear is difficult and gives infinite trou-

ble, but the War Department has manifested no desire to relieve us and prevent that means of Rebel communication. To-day we had a long conference. Lee has seen General Totten, and the conclusion is that the army must capture the place, assisted by the Navy, which will cover the landing. The practice of relying upon the Navy to do the principal fighting when forts or batteries are to be taken has had a bad effect in some respects and is vitiating the army.

Admiral Du Pont sends forward charges against Chief Engineer Stimers, who, on his passage from Charleston to New York after the late demonstration, expressed an opinion that Sumter might have been passed or taken. Du Pont requested Stimers to be sent to Port Royal for trial. Every officer under Du Pont has expressed a different opinion from Stimers and they would constitute the court. It is a strange request, and it would be quite as strange were I to comply with it. I would not trust Stimers, or any one whom Du Pont wished to make a victim, in his power. If not a little deranged, D. is a shrewd and selfish man. I think he is morbidly diseased. Drayton expresses this opinion. His conduct and influence have been unfortunate in many respects on his subordinates. Instead of sending Stimers to Port Royal to be sacrificed, I will order a court of inquiry at New York, where the facts may be elicited without prejudice or partiality. The alleged offense hardly justifies an inquiry in form, but nothing less will satisfy Du Pont, who wants a victim. More than this, he wants to lay his failure at Charleston on the ironclads, and with such a court as he would organize, and such witnesses as he has already trained, he would procure both Stimers and vessels to be condemned. It would be best for the ends of truth and justice to have an inquiry away from all partisanship, and from all unfair influences and management.

May 21, *Thursday.* Had an early call from the Pre-

sident, who brought a communication from Tassara to Seward, complaining of violation of neutral rights by a small pilot-boat, having a gun mounted amidships and believed to be an American vessel, which was annoying Spanish and other neutral vessels off the coast of Cuba. The President expressed doubts whether it was one of our vessels, but I told him I was inclined to believe it was, and that I had last week written Mr. Seward concerning the same craft in answer to Lord Lyons, who complained of outrage on the British schooner Dream, but I had also written Admiral Bailey on the subject. I read my letter to the President. He spoke of an unpleasant rumor concerning Grant, but on canvassing the subject we concluded it must be groundless, originating probably in the fact that he does not retain but has evacuated Jackson, after destroying the enemy's stores.

It is pretty evident that Senator John P. Hale, Chairman of the Naval Committee of the Senate, is occupying his time in the vacation in preparing for an attack on the Navy Department. He has a scheme for a tract of land with many angles, belonging to a friend, which land he has procured from Congress authority for the Secretary to purchase, but the Secretary does not want the land in that shape. It is a "job," and the object of this special legislative permission to buy, palpable. Hale called on me, and has written me, and I am given to understand, if I do not enter into his scheme, — make this purchase, —I am to encounter continued and persistent opposition from him.

Hale has also sent me a letter of eight closely written pages, full of disinterested, patriotic, and devoted loyalty, protesting against my detailing Commodore Van Brunt to be one of a board on a requisition from the War Department for a naval officer. Van Brunt has committed no wrong, is accused of none, but Hale does n't like him. I replied in half a page. I will not waste time on a man like Hale.

May 22, *Friday*. Information is received that Grant has beaten Pemberton after a hard fight of nine hours. It is said to have taken place on the 15th inst.

Had an interview with Admiral Lardner, who goes out to take charge of the West India Squadron. He is prudent, but, I fear, not so efficient as the duty assigned him requires. Wilkes has accomplished but little, has interfered with and defeated some Navy plans, but has not committed the indiscretions towards neutrals which I feared he would, and of which he is charged.

May 23, *Saturday*. Met the President, Stanton, and Halleck at the War Department. Fox was with me. Neither Du Pont nor General Hunter has answered the President's dispatch to them a month since. Halleck does not favor an attack on Charleston unless by the Navy. The army will second, so far as it can. Fox, who commanded the first military expedition to Sumter, is for a renewed attack, and wants the Navy to take the brunt. Stanton wants the matter prosecuted. I have very little confidence in success under the present admiral. It is evident that Du Pont is against doing anything, — that he is demoralizing others, and doing no good in that direction. If anything is to be done, we must have a new commander. Du Pont has talents and capability, but we are to have the benefit of neither at Charleston. The old army infirmity of this war, dilatory action, affects Du Pont. Commendation and encouragement, instead of stimulating him, have raised the mountain of difficulty higher daily. He is nursing Du Pont, whose fame he fears may suffer, and has sought sympathy by imparting his fears and doubts to his subordinates, until all are impressed with his apprehensions. The capture of Charleston by such a chief is an impossibility, whatever may be accomplished by another. This being the case, I have doubts of renewing the attack immediately, notwithstanding the zeal of Stanton and Fox. I certainly would not without some change of officers.

Having no faith, the commander can accomplish no work. In the struggle of war, there must sometimes be risks to accomplish results, but it is clear we can expect no great risks from Du Pont at Charleston. The difficulties increase daily [as] his imagination dwells on the subject. Under any circumstances we shall be likely to have trouble with him. He has remarkable address, is courtly, the head of a formidable clique, the most formidable in the Navy, loves intrigue, is jesuitical, and I have reason to believe is not always frank and sincere. It was finally concluded to delay proceedings until the arrival of General Gillmore, who should be put in possession of our views.

Sumner brought me this P.M. a report in manuscript of the case of the Peterhoff mail. I have read it and notice that the attorney, Delafield Smith, takes the opportunity to say, I doubt not at whose suggestion, that there is no report that the public mails have ever been opened and examined. He does not say there is any report they were not, or that there is any report whatever on the subject. All letters and papers deemed necessary are always examined. Upton well said in reply to Smith that the question had never been raised. Much time was spent in arguing this point respecting the mails. It was reported to Seward, and that point was seized upon, and the question raised, which led the President to call on me for a record of a case where public mails had been searched. Seward's man, Delafield Smith, having learned through Archibald, the British Consul, that the Secretary of State had given up our undoubted right to search the mails, set up the pettifogging pretense that there was no report that captured mails ever had been examined, which Judge Betts did not regard, and Upton correctly said the point had never been raised. The court never asked permission of the Executive to try a prize case; there is no report that they ever asked or did not ask; the right was no more questioned than the right to search the mails.

May 24, *Sunday.* We have had gratifying intelligence from the Southwest for several days past, particularly in the vicinity of Vicksburg. It is pretty certain that Grant will capture the place, and it is hoped Pemberton's army also. There is a rumor that the stars and stripes wave over Vicksburg, but the telegraph-wires are broken and communication interrupted.

May 25, *Monday.* Received a long dispatch from Admiral Porter at Haines Bluff, Yazoo River, giving details of successful fights and operations for several preceding days in that vicinity.

Am anxious in relation to the South Atlantic Squadron and feel daily the necessity of selecting a new commander. Du Pont is determined Charleston shall not be captured by the Navy, and that the Navy shall not attempt it; thinks it dangerous for the vessels to remain in Charleston Harbor, and prefers to occupy his palace ship, the Wabash, at Port Royal to roughing it in a smaller vessel off the port. His prize money would doubtless be greater without any risk. All officers under him are becoming affected by his feelings, adopt his tone, think inactivity best, — that the ironclads are mere batteries, not naval vessels, and that outside blockade is the true and only policy. Du Pont feels that he is strong in the Navy, strong in Congress, and strong in the country, and not without reason. There is not a more accomplished or shrewder gentleman in the service. Since Barron and others left, no officer has gathered a formidable clique in the Navy. He has studied with some effect to create one for himself, and has in his personal interest a number of excellent officers who I had hoped would not be inveigled. Good officers have warned me against him as a shrewd intriguer, but I have hoped to get along with him, for I valued his general intelligence, critical abilities, and advice. But I perceive that in all things he never forgets Du Pont. His success at Port Royal has made him feel that he is indispensable to the

service. The modern changes in naval warfare and in naval vessels are repugnant to him; and to the turret vessels he has a declared aversion. He has been active in schemes to retire officers; he is now at work to retire ironclads and impair confidence in them. As yet he professes respect and high regard for me personally, but he is not an admirer of the President, and has got greatly out with Fox, who has been his too partial friend. An attack is, however, to be made on the Department by opposing its policy and condemning its vessels. This will raise a party to attack and a party to defend. The monitors are to be pronounced failures, and the Department, which introduced, adopted, and patronized them, is to be held responsible, and not Du Pont, for the abortive attempt to reach Charleston. Drayton, who is his best friend, says to me in confidence that Du Pont has been too long confined on shipboard, that his system, mentally and physically, is affected, and I have no doubt thinks, but does not say, he ought to be relieved for his own good as well as that of the service. Du Pont is proud and will not willingly relinquish his command, although he has in a half-defiant way said if his course was not approved I must find another.

I look upon it, however, as a fixed fact that he will leave that squadron, but he is a favorite and I am at a loss as to his successor. Farragut, if not employed elsewhere, would be the man, and the country would accept the change with favor. The age and standing of D. D. Porter would be deemed objectionable by many, yet he has some good points for that duty. Foote would be a good man for the place in many respects, but he is somewhat overshadowed by Du Pont, with whom he has been associated and to whom he greatly defers. Dahlgren earnestly wants the position, and is the choice of the President, but there would be general discontent were he selected. Older officers who have had vastly greater sea service would feel aggrieved at the selection of Dahlgren and find ready sympathizers among the juniors. I have thought of Admiral Gregory, whom I was

originally inclined to designate as commander of the Gulf Blockading Squadron at the beginning of the war, but was overpersuaded by Paulding to take Mervine. A mistake but a lesson. It taught me not to yield my deliberate convictions in appointments and matters of this kind to the mere advice and opinion of another without a reason. Both Fox and Foote indorse Gregory. His age is against him for such active service, and would give the partisans of Du Pont opportunity to cavil.

May 26, *Tuesday*. Much of the time at the Cabinet-meeting was consumed in endeavoring to make it appear that one Cuniston, tried and condemned as a spy, was not exactly a spy, and that he might be let off. I did not participate in the discussion. It appeared to me, from the statement on all hands and from the finding of the court, that he was clearly and beyond question a spy, and I should have said so, had my opinion been asked, but I did not care to volunteer, unsolicited and without a thorough knowledge of all the facts, to argue away the life of a fellow being.

There was a sharp controversy between Chase and Blair on the subject of the Fugitive Slave Law, as attempted to be executed on one Hall here in the district. Both were earnest, Blair for executing the law, Chase for permitting the man to enter the service of the United States instead of being remanded into slavery. The President said this was one of those questions that always embarrassed him. It reminded him of a man in Illinois who was in debt and terribly annoyed by a pressing creditor, until finally the debtor assumed to be crazy whenever the creditor broached the subject. "I," said the President, "have on more than one occasion, in this room, when beset by extremists on this question, been compelled to appear to be very mad. I think," he continued, "none of you will ever dispose of this subject without getting mad."

I am by no means certain that it is wise or best to commence immediate operations upon Charleston. It is

a much more difficult task now than it was before the late undertaking. Our own men have less confidence, while our opponents have much more. The place has no strategic importance, yet there is not another place our anxious countrymen would so rejoice to see taken as this original seat of the great wickedness that has befallen our country. The moral effect of its capture would be great.

May 27, *Wednesday*. No decisive news from Vicksburg. The public mind is uneasy at the delay, yet I am glad to see blame attaches to no one because the place was not taken at once. There have been strange evidences of an unreasonable people on many occasions during the War. Had Halleck shown half the earnestness and ability of Farragut, we should have had Vicksburg in our possession a year ago.

Admiral Foote handed me a letter from Thomas Turner, in command of the Ironsides off Charleston. Turner anticipates the withdrawal of Du Pont from the command, and thinks Foote or Dahlgren will succeed him. Is willing to continue under Foote, but not under D., who is his junior and has been promoted for his scientific attainments, and not for nautical experience or ability. These views are natural and proper enough to an old naval and social companion. But he proceeds to comment on the ironclads; speaks of the "miserable monitors," though he admits they are admirably adapted for harbor defense; is astonished the Department should build so many; says it is to fill the pockets of the speculators. These are Du Pont's tactics. If true, the Secretary is a knave, or a blockhead the tool of knaves, and so of others connected with the Department. But the fact is, Tom Turner is a simple dupe, and merely echoes the insinuations of another, who moulds him at pleasure and is demoralizing that entire command.

Had some talk with Admiral Foote respecting Charleston. He believes the place may be taken, but does not express himself with confidence. Has great respect for Du

Pont, who, I fear, will exercise a bad influence upon him, should he be given the command. Admiral Gregory is too old and has some ailments. I have great faith in the old man, but the country would not forgive me the experiment, were he selected and to fail. There would be bitter opposition to Dahlgren from some good officers as well as the Tom Turners, were he given the squadron. Could he and Foote act together, it would be the best arrangement I could make.

May 28, *Thursday.* I this morning got hold of the pamphlet of Sir Vernon Harcourt, "Historicus," and am delighted to find a coincidence of views between him and myself on the subject of mails captured on vessels running the blockade, or carrying contraband. He warns his countrymen that "*the danger is not that Americans will concede too little but that Great Britain may accept too much.*" This is a mortifying, humiliating fact, the more so from its truth. Mr. Seward is not aware of what he is doing, and the injustice and dishonor he is inflicting on his country by his concession. It is lamentable that the President is misled in these matters, for Mr. Seward is tampering and trifling with national rights. I have no doubt he acted inconsiderately and ignorantly of any wrong in the first instance when he took upon himself to make these extraordinary and disgraceful concessions, but, having become involved in error, he has studied, not to enlighten himself and serve the country, but to impose upon and mislead the President in order to extricate himself.

Dahlgren to-day broached the subject of operations against Charleston. He speaks of it earnestly and energetically. Were it not so that his assignment to that command would cause dissatisfaction, I would, as the President strongly favors him, let him show his ability as an officer in his legitimate professional duty. He would enter upon the work intelligently and with a determination to be successful. Whether he has the skill, power, and ability of

a first-rate naval commander is yet to be tested. He has the zeal, pride, and ambition, but there are other qualities in which he may be deficient.

Brown of the wrecked Indianola and Fontaine of the burnt Mississippi, each called on me to-day. They were both captured last February, have been exchanged, and arrived to-day from Richmond. Their accounts correspond with each other and with what we have previously heard in regard to the deplorable state of things in the Rebel region. Poor beef three times a week and corn bread daily were dealt to them. The white male population was all away. The railroads are in a wretched condition, the running-stock worse than the roads.

May 29, *Friday*. We have accounts of farther and extensive depredations by the Alabama. These depredations were near the Line, where the Department, in anticipation of her appearance, had ordered the Vanderbilt. She was specially ordered to Fernando de Noronha, whither the Alabama was expected to go, — where she did go, and where she would have been captured, had instructions been obeyed, and not interfered with. But Admiral Wilkes, having fallen in with that vessel and finding her a commodious ship with extensive and comfortable accommodations, deliberately annexed her to his squadron and detained her in the West Indies as his flagship, hunting prizes, too long for the service on which she was specially sent. I, of course, shall be abused for the escape of the Alabama and her destruction of property by those who know nothing of the misconduct of Wilkes. The propriety of recalling that officer is more apparent than ever. He has accomplished nothing, but has sadly interrupted and defeated the plans of the Department. The country, ignorant of these facts and faults, will disapprove his removal, and assail the Department for the mischief of the Alabama, whereas, had he been earlier removed, the latter would not have happened.

I this morning sent for Admiral Foote and had a free and full talk with him in regard to the command of the South Atlantic Squadron. I am satisfied he would be pleased with the position, and really desired it when he knew Du Pont was to be relieved. I then introduced him to General Gillmore, and with the charts and maps before us took a rapid survey of the harbor and plan of operations. Before doing this, I said to Foote that I thought it would be well for the country, the service, and himself, were Admiral Dahlgren associated with him. He expressed the pleasure it would give him, but doubted if D. would consent to serve as second.

I requested Mr. Fox to call on D. and inform him that I had given Foote the squadron, that I should be glad to have him embark with Foote, and take an active part against Charleston. If he responded favorably, I wished him to come with Fox to the conference. Fox returned with an answer that not only was D. unwilling to go as second, but that he wished to decline entirely, unless he could have command of both naval and land forces. This precludes farther thought of him. I regret it for his own sake. It is one of the errors of a lifetime. He has not seen the sea service he ought for his rank, and there is a feeling towards him, on account of his advancement, among naval men which he had now an opportunity to remove. No one questions his abilities as a skillful and scientific ordnance officer, but some of his best friends in his profession doubt his capability as a naval officer on such duty as is here proposed. It is doubtful if he ever will have another so good an opportunity.

Foote says he will himself see D., and has a conviction that he can induce him to go with him. I doubt it. Dahlgren is very proud and aspiring, and will injure himself and his professional standing in consequence. With undoubted talents of a certain kind he has intense selfishness, and I am sorry to see him on this occasion, as I have seen him on others, regardless of the feelings and rights of officers of

greater experience, who have seen vastly more sea service and who possess high naval qualities and undoubted merit. In a matter of duty, such as this, he shows what is charged upon him, — that he is less devoted to the country than to himself, that he never acts on any principle of self-sacrifice. While friendly to him, as I have shown on repeated occasions, I am friendly to others also, and must respect their feelings and protect their rights.

May 30, *Saturday.* I am surprised at the loose and improper management of General Dix in regard to the blockade and traffic in the Rebel region. Admiral Lee has sent me, yesterday and to-day, some strange permits for trade signed by Dix, wholly unauthorized and which cannot in sincerity and good faith be allowed.

May 31, *Sunday.* Captain Simpson, who has been selected by Admiral Foote as his Fleet Captain and special confidant, arrived to-day from Newport. Both he and F. were waiting for me, and met me at the church door as I came from morning service, and accompanied me to my house. We had some general talk in regard to propositions and duties. Foote desires to leave this evening for the North and Simpson goes with him.

Admiral Lardner called this afternoon. Came on from Philadelphia for instructions and final orders. He will sail on Tuesday in the Ticonderoga to take command of the West India Squadron. I am to encounter the resentment of Wilkes and Du Pont at the same time. They are not friends, but may suppress mutual dislike in a mutual assault on me. Wilkes does not disappoint me, but Du Pont does. The former is the least dangerous, though the most rash and violent.

IX

The Arrest of Vallandigham and the Case of the *Chicago Times* — The Removal of Wilkes — Count Gurowski on Welles's Appointment to the Cabinet — General Milroy at Winchester — The President and the Cabinet kept in Ignorance of Army Movements — Lack of Confidence in Hooker — Alarm at Rumors of Confederate Advance into Pennsylvania — The President calls for 100,000 Volunteers — The President's Opinion of "Orpheus C. Kerr" — Illness of Admiral Foote — The Secretary of State and the Matamoras Situation — Sumner's Opinion of Hooker — Appointment of Dahlgren to the South Atlantic Squadron in Foote's Place — The French Tobacco in Richmond — Estimate of Dahlgren — The Monitors and the Fifteen-Inch Guns — Founding of the *Army and Navy Gazette* — Congratulations to Commodore Rodgers on the Capture of the Fingal — The President betrays Doubts of Hooker — Blair on the Presidential Aspirations of Chase and McClellan — Death of Admiral Foote — His Lifelong Friendship with Welles — Needless Alarm for the Safety of New York — Meade succeeds Hooker — Rumors of Confederate Raids near Washington — Lee's Advance into Pennsylvania.

June 1, *Monday*. Gave the President this A.M. a list of applicants for appointment to the Naval Academy. A great crowd was in attendance; I therefore left the list for him to examine and deferred action until another interview.

Gave Admiral Lardner written instructions at some length, and had a pretty full conversation in regard to his duties. He is discreet, prudent, perhaps over-cautious, and I fear may want energy and force, but until he is tested I will not pass judgment.

June 2, *Tuesday*. Chase, Blair, Bates, and myself were at the Cabinet-meeting. Seward was absent, but his son was present. So also was Judge Otto, Assistant Secretary of the Interior. Stanton, though absent, sent no representative. He condemns the practice of allowing assistants to be present in Cabinet council, a practice which was introduced by Seward, and says he will never submit or discuss

any important question, when an assistant is present. I think this is the general feeling and the practice of all.

There was some discussion of affairs at Vicksburg. The importance of capturing that stronghold and opening the navigation of the river is appreciated by all, and confidence is expressed in Grant, but it seems that not enough was doing. The President said Halleck declares he can furnish no additional troops. As yet I have seen nothing to admire in the military management of General Halleck, whose mind is heavy and, if employed at all, is apparently engaged on something else than the public matter in hand. At this time when the resources of the nation should be called out and activity pervade all military operations, he sits back in his chair, doing comparatively nothing. It worries the President, yet he relies upon Halleck and apparently no one else in the War Department. No one more fully realizes the magnitude of the occasion, and the vast consequences involved, than the President; he wishes all to be done that can be done, but yet in army operations will not move or do except by the consent of the dull, stolid, inefficient, and incompetent General-in-Chief.

Stanton does not attend one half of the Cabinet-meetings. When he comes, he communicates little of importance. Not unfrequently he has a private conference with the President in the corner of the room, or with Seward in the library. Chase, Blair, and Bates have each expressed their mortification and chagrin that things were so conducted. To-day, as we came away, Blair joined me, and said he knew not what we were coming to; that he had tried to have things different.

June 3, *Wednesday*. Wrote Du Pont that Foote would relieve him. I think he anticipates it and perhaps wants it to take place. He makes no suggestions, gives no advice, presents no opinion, says he will obey orders. He is evidently uneasy, — it appears to me as much dissatisfied with himself as any one. Everything shows he is a disap-

pointed man, afflicted with his own infirmities. I perceive he is preparing for a controversy with the Department, — laying out the ground, getting his officers committed, — and he has besides strong friends in Congress and elsewhere. He has been well and kindly treated by the Department. I have the name and blame of favoring him by some of the best officers, and have borne with his aberrations passively.

The arrest of Vallandigham and the order to suppress the circulation of the *Chicago Times* in his military district issued by General Burnside have created much feeling. It should not be otherwise. The proceedings were arbitrary and injudicious. It gives bad men the right of questions, an advantage of which they avail themselves. Good men, who wish to support the Administration, find it difficult to defend these acts. They are Burnside's, unprompted, I think, by any member of the Administration, and yet the responsibility is here unless they are disavowed and B. called to an account, which cannot be done. The President — and I think every member of the Cabinet — regrets what has been done, but as to the measures which should now be taken there are probably differences.

The constitutional rights of the parties injured are undoubtedly infringed upon. It is claimed, however, that the Constitution, laws, and authorities are assailed with a view to their destruction by the Rebels, with whom V. and the *Chicago Times* are in sympathy and concert. The efforts of the Rebels are directed to the overthrow of the government, and V. and his associates unite with them in waging war against the constituted authorities. Should the government, and those who are called to legally administer it, be sustained, or should those who are striving to destroy both? There are many important and difficult problems to solve, growing out of the present condition of affairs. Where is the constitutional right to interdict trade between citizens, to blockade the ports, to seize private property, to dispossess and occupy the houses of the in-

habitants, etc., etc.? In peaceful times there would be no right to do these things; it may be said there would be no necessity. Unfortunately the peaceful operations of the Constitution have been interrupted, obstructed, and are still obstructed. A state of war exists; violent and forcible measures are resorted to in order to resist and destroy the government, which have begotten violent and forcible measures to vindicate and restore its peaceful operation. Vallandigham and the *Chicago Times* claim all the benefits, guarantees, and protection of the government which they are assisting the Rebels to destroy. Without the courage and manliness to go over to the public enemy, to whom they give, so far as they dare, aid and comfort, they remain here to promote discontent and disaffection.

While I have no sympathy for those who are, in their hearts, as unprincipled traitors as Jefferson Davis, I lament that our military officers should, without absolute necessity, disregard those great principles on which our government and institutions rest.

June 4, *Thursday.* Only a sense of duty would have led me to relieve Du Pont and Wilkes. With D. my relations have been kind and pleasant, on my part confiding. Latterly he has disappointed me, and given indication that my confidence was not returned. Wilkes is a different man and of an entirely different temperament. Du Pont is pleasant in manner and one of the most popular officers in the Navy; Wilkes is arbitrary and one of the most unpopular. There are exceptions in both cases. Du Pont is scrupulous to obey orders; Wilkes often disregards and recklessly breaks them. The Governments of Great Britain, Denmark, Mexico, and Spain have each complained of Wilkes, but, except in the case of Denmark, it appears to me without much cause, and even in the case of Denmark the cause was aggravated. There was some mismanagement in the Mexican case that might not stand close scrutiny. As regards the rights of neutrals, he has so far as I yet know,

deported himself correctly, and better than I feared so far as England is concerned, after the affair of the Trent and with his intense animosity towards that government. His position has doubtless been cause of jealousy and irritation on the part of Great Britain, and in that respect his selection from the beginning had its troubles. He has accomplished less than I expected; has been constantly grumbling and complaining, which was expected; has captured a few blockade-runners, but not an armed cruiser, which was his special duty, and has probably defeated the well-devised plan of the Navy Department to take the Alabama. At the last advices most of his squadron was concentrated at St. Thomas, including the Vanderbilt, which should then have been on the equator, by specific orders. To-day Mrs. Wilkes, with whom we have been sociable, and I might almost say intimate, writes Mrs. Welles a note asking if any change has been made in the command of the West India Squadron. This note was on my table as I came out from breakfast. The answer of Mrs. Welles was, I suppose, not sufficiently definite, for I received a note with similar inquiries in the midst of pressing duties, and the messenger was directed to await an answer. I frankly informed her of the change. Alienation and probably anger will follow, but I could not do differently, though this necessary official act will, not unlikely, be resented as a personal wrong.

June 5, *Friday.* The President read to-day a paper which he had prepared in reply to Erastus Corning and others. It has vigor and ability and with some corrections will be a strong paper.

June 6, *Saturday.* Am unhappy over our affairs. The Army of the Potomac is doing but little; I do not learn that much is expected or intended. The failure at Chancellorsville has never been satisfactorily explained. Perhaps it cannot be. Some of the officers say if there had been no

whiskey in the army after crossing the Rappahannock we should have had complete success. But the President and Halleck are silent on this subject.

How far Halleck is sustaining Grant at Vicksburg I do not learn. He seems heavy and uncertain in regard to matters there. A further failure at V. will find no justification. To-day he talks of withdrawing a portion of the small force at Port Royal. I am not, however, as anxious as some for an immediate demonstration on Charleston. There are, I think, strong reasons for deferring action for a time, unless the army is confident of success by approaches on Morris Island. Halleck is confident the place can be so taken. But while he expresses this belief, he is not earnest in carrying it into effect. He has suddenly broken out with zeal for Vicksburg, and is ready to withdraw most of the small force at Port Royal and send it to the Mississippi. Before they could reach Grant, the fate of Vicksburg will be decided. If such a movement is necessary now, it was weeks ago, while we were in consultation for army work in South Carolina and Georgia.

Halleck inspires no zeal in the army or among our soldiers. Stanton is actually hated by many officers, and is more intimate with certain extreme partisans in Congress — the Committee on the Conduct of War and others — than with the Executive Administration and military men. The Irish element is dissatisfied with the service, and there is an unconquerable prejudice on the part of many whites against black soldiers. But all our increased military strength now comes from the negroes. Partyism is stronger with many in the Free States than patriotism. Every coward and niggardly miser opposes the War. The former from fear, lest he should be drafted; the latter to avoid taxes.

The examination at the Naval School has closed, and the practice ship, the Macedonian, sails to-day. The report of the board is highly commendatory of the school. I have, amidst multiplied duties, tried to make the school useful,

and have met with opposition and obstruction when I should have had support.

June 8, *Monday*. Wrote Secretary of State on the subject of the complaints of the Danish Government against Wilkes, who is charged with abusing hospitality at St. Thomas. Made the best statement I could without censuring Wilkes, who is coming home, partly from these causes.

Have a letter from Foote, who is not ready to relieve Du Pont. Speaks of bad health and disability. It must be real, for whatever his regard for, or tenderness to D., Foote promptly obeys orders.

Spoke to the President regarding weekly performances of the Marine Band. It has been customary for them to play in the public grounds south of the Mansion once a week in summer, for many years. Last year it was intermitted, because Mrs. Lincoln objected in consequence of the death of her son. There was grumbling and discontent, and there will be more this year if the public are denied the privilege for private reasons. The public will not sympathize in sorrows which are obtrusive and assigned as a reason for depriving them of enjoyments to which they have been accustomed, and it is a mistake to persist in it. When I introduced the subject to-day, the President said Mrs. L. would not consent, certainly not until after the 4th of July. I stated the case pretty frankly, although the subject is delicate, and suggested that the band could play in Lafayette Square. Seward and Usher, who were present, advised that course. The President told me to do what I thought best.

Count Adam Gurowski, who is splenetic and querulous, a strange mixture of good and evil, always growling and discontented, who loves to say harsh things and speak good of but few, seldom makes right estimates and correct discrimination of character, but means to be truthful if not just, tells me my selection for the Cabinet was acquiesced

in by the radical circle to which he belongs because they felt confident my influence with the President would be good, and that I would be a safeguard against the scheming and plotting of Weed and Seward, whose intrigues they understood and watched. When I came here, just preceding the inauguration in 1861, I first met this Polish exile, and was amused and interested in him, though I could not be intimate with one of his rough, coarse, ardent, and violent partisan temperament. His associates were then Greeley, D. D. Field, Opdyke, and men of that phase of party. I have no doubt that what he says is true of his associates, colored to some extent by his intense prejudices. He was for a year or two in the State Department as a clerk under Seward, and does not conceal that he was really a spy upon him, or, as he says, watched him. He says that when Seward became aware that the radicals relied upon me as a friend to check the loose notions and ultraism of the State Department, he (S.) went to work with the President to destroy my influence; that by persisting he so far succeeded as to induce the President to go against me on some important measures, where his opinion leaned to mine; that in this way, Seward had intrenched himself. There is doubtless some truth — probably some error — in the Count's story. I give the outlines. Eames, with whom he is intimate, has told me these things before. The Count makes him his confidant.

June 9, *Tuesday*. Admiral Foote arrived this A.M. Is ardent and earnest for his new duties. Is fully possessed of my views. Left this evening for New York. Will sail next Monday. In the mean time, Du Pont must hold on. Had a carefully prepared and characteristic letter from Du Pont, inclosing one from the commanders of the ironclads, which he has prompted and secured. This is for the future, and to make a record for himself.

June 10, *Wednesday*. Rumors of a cavalry fight in Cul-

peper. The President and Stanton have gone to Falmouth. Nothing definite from Vicksburg. Am not favorably impressed with what I hear of the fight on the Rappahannock.

The accounts of piratical depredations disturb me. My views, instructions, and arrangements to capture the Alabama, which would have prevented these depredations, have failed through the misconduct of Wilkes. The Rebel cruisers are now beginning to arm their prizes and find adventurers to man them. Our *neutral* friends will be likely to find the police of the seas in a bad way.

June 11, *Thursday*. The President informs me that he did not go to Falmouth, but merely to Fort Lyon near Alexandria.

June 12, *Friday*. The interference of Members of Congress in the petty appointments and employment of laborers in the navy yards is annoying and pernicious. The public interest is not regarded by the Members, but they crowd partisan favorites for mechanical positions in place of good mechanics and workmen, and when I refuse to entertain their propositions, they take offense. I can't help it if they do. I will not prostitute my trust to their schemes and selfish personal partisanship.

June 13, *Saturday*. We had music from the Marine Band to-day in Lafayette Square. The people are greatly pleased. Had word just after five this P.M. that three vessels were yesterday captured by a pirate craft off Cape Henry and burnt. Sent Fox at once with orders to telegraph to New York and Philadelphia, etc., for every vessel in condition to proceed to sea without delay in search of this wolf that is prowling so near us. If necessary the Tuscarora must sail forthwith and not wait for Admiral Foote.

June 14, *Sunday*. Farther reports of depredations. Got

off vessels last night from New York and Hampton Roads. Sent to Boston for Montgomery to cruise off Nantucket.

Scary rumors abroad of army operations and a threatened movement of Lee upon Pennsylvania. No doubt there has been a change. I fear our friends are in difficulties. Went to the War Department this evening. Found the President and General Halleck with Secretary of War in the room of the telegraphic operator. Stanton was uneasy, said it would be better to go into another room. The President and myself went into the Secretary's office; the other two remained. The President said quietly to me he was feeling very bad; that he found Milroy and his command were captured, or would be. He (Milroy) has written that he can hold out five days, but at the end of five days he will be in no better condition, for he can't be relieved. "It is," said the President, "Harper's Ferry over again."

I inquired why Milroy did not fall back, — if he had not been apprised by Hooker, or from here, what Lee was doing, etc. I added, if Lee's army was moving, Hooker would take advantage and sever his forces, perhaps take his rear guard. The President said it would seem so, but that our folks appeared to know but little how things are, and showed no evidence that they ever availed themselves of any advantage.

How fully the President is informed, and whether he is made acquainted with the actual state of things is uncertain. He depends on the War Department, which, I think, is not informed and is in confusion. From neither of the others did I get a word. Stanton came once or twice into the room, where we were, in a fussy way. Halleck did not move from his chair where he sat with his cigar, the door being open between the two rooms. From some expressions which were dropped from H., I suspect poor Milroy is to be made the scapegoat, and blamed for the stupid blunders, neglects, and mistakes of those who should have warned and advised him.

I do not learn that any members of the Cabinet are informed of army movements. The President is kept in ignorance and defers to the General-in-Chief, though not pleased that he is not fully advised of matters as they occur. There is a modest distrust of himself, of which advantage is taken. For a week, movements have been going on of which he has known none, or very few, of the details.

I came away from the War Department painfully impressed. After recent events, Hooker cannot have the confidence which is essential to success, and all-important to the commander in the field. Halleck does not grow upon me as a military man of power and strength; has little aptitude, skill, or active energy. In this state of things, the able Rebel general is moving a powerful army, and has no one to confront him on whose ability and power the country relies. There was confidence in McClellan's ability to organize, to defend, and to repel, though he was worthless in attack, but there is no such feeling towards Hooker. He has not grown in public estimation since placed in command. If he is intemperate, as is reported, God help us! The President, who was the first person to intimate this failing to me, has a personal liking for Hooker, and clings to him when others give way.

The letter to Erastus Corning and others is published and well received.

June 15, *Monday*. Met Blair at the depot. Told him of the conversation I had last evening with the President and the appearance of things at the War Department. It affected him greatly. He has never had confidence in either Stanton, Halleck, or Hooker. He fairly groaned that the President should continue to trust them and defer to them, when the magnitude of the questions is considered. "Strange, strange," he exclaimed, "that the President, who has sterling ability, should give himself over so completely to Stanton and Seward."

Something of a panic pervades the city. Singular

rumors reach us of Rebel advances into Maryland. It is said they have reached Hagerstown, and some of them have penetrated as far as Chambersburg in Pennsylvania. These reports are doubtless exaggerations, but I can get nothing satisfactory from the War Department of the Rebel movements, or of our own. There is trouble, confusion, uncertainty, where there should be calm intelligence.

I have a panic telegraph from Governor Curtin, who is excitable and easily alarmed, entreating that guns and gunners may be sent from the navy yard at Philadelphia to Harrisburg without delay. We have not a gunner that we can spare. Commodore Stribling can spare men, temporarily, from the navy yard.

I went again, at a late hour, to the War Department, but could get no facts or intelligence from the Secretary, who either does not know or dislikes to disclose the position and condition of the army. He did not know that the Rebels had reached Hagerstown; did not know but some of them had; quite as likely to be in Philadelphia as Harrisburg. Ridiculed Curtin's fears. Thought it would be well, however, to send such guns and men as could be spared to allay his apprehension. I could not get a word concerning General Milroy and his command, — whether safe or captured, retreating or maintaining his position. All was vague, opaque, thick darkness. I really think Stanton is no better posted than myself, and from what Stanton says am afraid Hooker does not comprehend Lee's intentions nor know how to counteract them. Halleck has no activity; never exhibits sagacity or foresight, though he can record and criticize the past. It looks to me as if Lee was putting forth his whole energy and force in one great and desperate struggle which shall be decisive; that he means to strike a blow that will be severely felt, and of serious consequences, and thus bring the War to a close. But all is conjecture.

June 16, *Tuesday*. We hear this morning that Milroy has cut his way through the Rebels and arrived at Harper's Ferry, where he joins Tyler. I cannot learn from the War Department how early Milroy was warned from here that the Rebels were approaching him and that it would be necessary for him to fall back. Halleck scolds and swears about him as a stupid, worthless fellow. This seems his way to escape censure himself and cover his stupidity in higher position.

The President yesterday issued a proclamation calling for 100,000 volunteers to be raised in Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, and West Virginia. This call is made from outside pressure, and intelligence received chiefly from Pennsylvania and not from the War Department or Headquarters. Tom A. Scott, late Assistant Secretary of War, came on expressly from Pennsylvania, sent by Curtin, and initiated the proceeding.

Halleck sits, and smokes, and swears, and scratches his arm and [indecipherable], but exhibits little military capacity or intelligence; is obfusticated, muddy, uncertain, stupid as to what is doing or to be done.

Neither Seward nor Stanton nor Blair nor Usher was at the Cabinet-meeting. The two last are not in Washington. At such a time all should be here and the meeting full and frequent for general consultation and general purposes.

Scarcely a word on army movements. Chase attempted to make inquiries; asked whether a demonstration could not be made on Richmond, but the President gave it no countenance. No suggestions ever come from Halleck.

Young Ulric Dahlgren, who is on Hooker's staff, came in to-day. He is intelligent and gallant. I asked where the army was. He says between Fairfax and Centerville, or most of it was there; that Lee and the Rebel army are on the opposite side of the mountain, fronting Hooker. He knows little or nothing of the reported Rebel advances into Pennsylvania, and thinks Hooker does not know it. This

is extraordinary, but it accounts for the confusion and bewilderment at the War Office.

June 17, *Wednesday*. Had a telegram at ten last night from Mr. Felton, President of the Philadelphia & Baltimore Railroad, requesting that a gunboat might be sent to Havre de Grace to protect the Company's ferryboat and property. Says he has information that the Rebels intend going down the river to seize it.

I went forthwith to the War Department to ascertain whether there was really any such alarming necessity, for it seemed to me, from all I had been able to learn, that it was a panic invocation. Found the President and Stanton at the War Department, jubilant over intelligence just received that no Rebels had reached Carlisle, as had been reported, and it was believed they had not even entered Pennsylvania. Stanton threw off his reserve, and sneered and laughed at Felton's call for a gunboat. Soon a messenger came in from General Schenck, who declares no Rebels have crossed the Potomac, that the stragglers and baggage-trains of Milroy had run away in affright, and squads of them, on different parallel roads, had alarmed each other, and each fled in terror with all speed to Harrisburg. This alone was asserted to be the basis of the great panic which had alarmed Pennsylvania and the country.

The President was relieved and in excellent spirits. Stanton was apparently feeling well, but I could not assure myself he was wholly relieved of the load which had been hanging upon him. The special messenger brought a letter to Stanton, which he read, but was evidently unwilling to communicate its contents, even to the President, who asked about it. Stanton wrote a few lines, which he gave to the officer, who left. General Meigs came in about this time, and I was sorry to hear Stanton communicate an exaggerated account of Milroy's disaster, who, he said, had not seen a fight or even an enemy. Meigs indignantly denied the statement, and said Milroy himself had communicated

the fact that he had fought a battle and escaped. While he (Meigs) did not consider Milroy a great general, or a man of very great ability, he believed him to be truthful and brave, and if General Schenck's messenger said there had been no fight he disbelieved him. Stanton insisted that was what the officer (whom I think he called Payson) said. I told him I did not so understand the officer. The subject was then dropped; but the conversation gave me uneasiness. Why should the Secretary of War wish to misrepresent and belittle Milroy? Why exaggerate the false rumor and try to give currency to, if he did not originate, the false statement that there was no fight and a panic flight?

The President was in excellent humor. He said this flight would be a capital joke for Orpheus C. Kerr to get hold of. He could give scope to his imagination over the terror of broken squads of panic-stricken teamsters, frightened at each other and alarming all Pennsylvania. Meigs, with great simplicity, inquired who this person (Orpheus C. Kerr) was. "Why," said the President, "have you not read those papers? They are in two volumes; any one who has not read them must be a heathen." He said he had enjoyed them greatly, except when they attempted to play their wit on him, which did not strike him as very successful, but rather disgusted him. "Now the hits that are given to you, Mr. Welles, or to Chase, I can enjoy, but I dare say they may have disgusted you while I was laughing at them. So *vice versa* as regards myself." He then spoke of a poem by this Orpheus C. Kerr which mythologically described McClellan as a monkey fighting a serpent representing the Rebellion, but the joke was the monkey continually called for "more tail," "more tail," which Jupiter gave him, etc., etc.

June 18, *Thursday*. I find that Fox, whom I authorized to telegraph to the Commandant of the Yards the other night to get off immediately vessels after the pirate Tacony, amplified the order, and that a very large number of ves-

sels are being chartered or pressed into the service. While it was necessary to have some, there is such a thing as overdoing, but the order having gone out in my name, I could not contest it.

Have information that Admiral Foote is quite ill at the Astor House, New York. He came on from New Haven to New York, expecting to take the Tuscarora on Monday for Port Royal, but that vessel had been dispatched after the pirate Tacony. This disappointment, the excitement, over-exertion, and domestic anxiety and affliction have probably had an effect on his sensitive and nervous mind. He told me with some emotion, when last here, that his wife's health was such it would detain him a few days to make certain indispensable arrangements, for their parting would be final, she could not be expected to live till he returned.

Wrote Seward that the condition of affairs on the Rio Grande and at Matamoras was unsatisfactory. We have had several conversations on the subject, in which I have tried to convince him of the injury done by the unrestricted trade and communication on that river, and to persuade him that he could make his mark and do a great public service by procuring to be established a principle in regard to the right of adjoining nations, like the United States and Mexico, and the occupancy of a mutual highway like the Rio Grande, with the necessary authority to enforce a blockade, — questions that have never yet been decided and settled among nations. Our blockade is rendered in a great degree ineffective because we cannot shut off traffic and mail facilities, or exclude commercial and postal intercourse with the Rebels via the Rio Grande. An immense commerce has suddenly sprung up, nominally with Matamoras, but actually with Texas and the whole Southwest, nay, with the entire Rebel region, for letters are interchanged between Richmond and England by that route.

There are one or two hundred vessels off the mouth of the Rio Grande, where there were never more than six or

eight before the War, nor will there be more than a dozen when the War is over. English merchant adventurers are establishing regular lines with Matamoras, of which the Peterhoff was one, carrying supplies and mails to the Rebels and receiving cotton in return. Unfortunately, Mr. Seward has given encouragement to them, by conceding the sanctity of captured mails, which, with the evidence which would insure condemnation, are to be forwarded unopened to their destination. In no respect, way, or manner does the Secretary of State furnish a correction by assisting or proposing a principle to be recognized by nations, or by any arrangement with Mexico, or France, or both.

June 19, *Friday*. The illness of Admiral Foote is serious, I fear fatal. Our first intelligence this morning made his case almost hopeless; later in the day we have a telegraph that he is more comfortable.

Chase informs me that he has just returned from a visit to Hooker's headquarters, at or near Fairfax Court-House. The troops, he says, are in good spirits and excellent condition, as is Hooker himself. He commends Hooker as in every respect all that we could wish. His (Chase's) tone towards Halleck is much altered since our last conversation. All of which is encouraging. But Chase's estimate and judgment of men fluctuates as he has intercourse with them and they are friendly and communicative or otherwise.

June 20, *Saturday*. Tidings from New York to-day are sad respecting Admiral Foote. I fear he cannot recover and that his hours upon earth are few. His death will be a great loss to the country, a greater one in this emergency to me than to any other out of his own family. Individual sorrows and bereavements and personal friendship are not to weigh in matters of national concernment, but I cannot forget that "we were boys together," and that in later and

recent years we have mutually sustained each other. I need him and the prestige of his name in the place to which he has been ordered.

I have sent Dr. Whelan, an old and intimate friend and shipmate of Foote, who thoroughly understands his physical system and peculiarities, — has been his daily companion for years in different climes, — to New York. His presence, even, will be cheering and pleasant to Foote.

Sumner's opinion and estimate of men does not agree with Chase's. Sumner expresses an absolute want of confidence in Hooker; says he knows him to be a blasphemous wretch; that after crossing the Rappahannock and reaching Centerville, Hooker exultingly exclaimed, "The enemy is in my power, and God Almighty cannot deprive me of them." I have heard before of this, but not so direct and positive. The sudden paralysis that followed, when the army in the midst of a successful career was suddenly checked and commenced its retreat, has never been explained. Whiskey is said by Sumner to have done the work. The President said if Hooker had been killed by the shot which knocked over the pillar that stunned him, we should have been successful.

June 21, *Sunday.* I have three telegrams from Dr. Whelan to-day, all of the same tenor. The last, at 4 P.M., says Admiral Foote continues much the same, — insensible and slowly sinking. Dahlgren, who left New York yesterday, says the case is hopeless, that Foote told him it was the last of this world and he was prepared for the event.

We have pretty authentic reports of a protracted fight at Aldie. The War Department is not communicative, and I apprehend for the reason that it is not better advised than the rest of us, as yet. A train of ambulances passed this evening, going, I doubt not, for the wounded.

The Richmond papers speak of the capture of the steamer Fingal by our ironclads. This is important, and

I am inclined to credit it. John Rodgers has written his family that he was in Nassau Sound, having been ordered there to watch the Fingal. The Richmond report corresponds with this, and states she was captured after a fight of thirty minutes with the monitors.

I had to-day a full and unreserved talk with Dahlgren. Told him it was now evident Foote could not go on the service to which he was ordered, — at all events, if he survived, not for the present; I should therefore designate him to relieve Du Pont. This would, to some extent, involve the selection of a new staff, for it was not likely that Foote's confidants were his confidants. [I remarked] that not unlikely some of the elder officers who had seen great sea service would feel disinclined to remain on the station under him; that in giving him this command I was consulting the wishes of the President; that to supersede Du Pont, under any circumstances, involved some risk and responsibility to both the Department and the recipient; that he could not be unaware his promotion had caused some discontent, and that it would not be lessened by this command. If any of his seniors in past times desired to be transferred, they must be permitted to do so, without prejudice.

I stated that this appointment was a specialty, imposed upon the Department by Admiral Foote's affliction when on his way to assume these duties; that this interruption made prompt action necessary; that he had sought the privilege of leading in the assault on Sumter under Du Pont; that I had proposed him as an assistant and second to Foote; that he was to go for a particular purpose, and his absence from the Bureau would therefore be temporary. In the mean time, Commander Wise, the assistant who had been associated with him, could take charge of and go forward with the ordnance duties as well as, and perhaps better than, any one else. To all this he assented, but expressed a strong wish that a new appointment might be made, and he entirely relieved from the Bureau. I

replied that I could not for a moment think of relieving him of charge of the ordnance, nor ought he to ask, or be willing, to relinquish it; that was his place, to which he had been educated and for which he had aptitude, and it was my wish he should retain his position as Chief of the Ordnance Bureau during my connection with the Department.

As related to any demonstration on Charleston, should any be made, he was to consider himself clothed with full powers, and to prescribe details, communicating at all times and without reserve to the Department; to let me have not only all the good news but any bad news, and to tell me frankly at any time of embarrassments, change of views, or difficulties of any kind.

June 22, *Monday.* The rumors yesterday of a fight near Aldie are fully confirmed, but as yet no definite information. It is not always pleasant to go to the War Department to have news verified, even if they have the facts. Often there is unaccountable, and I think inexcusable, want of correct information at Army Headquarters; if there is a reverse, or if there is want of information in relation to rumors that reach us, there is always prevarication and sometimes a sullen reserve. Generally I have found Stanton affable and communicative when alone, but not always, especially if there has been disaster or unpleasant news. Halleck is worse. There has never been intimacy between him and me; probably there never will be. I have not called over to-day, for those who have, and are entitled to know what was doing, have been unsuccessful or met with an unpleasant rebuff.

June 23, *Tuesday.* Seward called this morning and had quite a story to tell of foreign affairs and the successes that have attended his management. For a time, he says, matters looked a little threatening with France, but Count Mercier tells him all is now right, — we can do, on certain

points which have been controverted, pretty much as we please.

All this was a prelude to a proposition, the object of which was to make excellent friends of the French, who have ten thousand hogsheads of tobacco in Richmond which they declare was purchased before the Rebellion, and which they cannot get out by reason of the blockade. This tobacco was being heavily taxed by the Rebels, and what the French Government now wants, and what he very much wanted, was an arrangement by which this French tobacco might be got from Richmond. It would be such a capital thing, and the favor would be so highly appreciated by the French, that they would become our very good friends.

I informed Mr. Seward it was a plain case and easily disposed of. We had only to lift the blockade and the French tobacco and everybody else's tobacco would leave Richmond. I did not see how this favor could be granted to the French Government and denied to other governments, and if extended to foreigners, our own citizens, many of whom had large amounts of property in the Rebel region, could not be interdicted from its exportation. In plain words the blockade must be maintained in good faith or be abandoned. I was not aware that we were under any special obligation to the French Government; I would not purchase or bribe, and I was opposed to favoritism as a principle in government. He said his idea was that a distinction might be made in this, — that the tobacco belonged to the Government, and therefore was an isolated case which could not be claimed as a precedent, and furthermore it was bought and paid for before the blockade was established. I told him the principle was the same with governments as with individuals; that the Belgian and others had made haste to remove their tobacco within the time limited when the blockade was declared; that their sympathies were with us, they had no faith in the Rebel movement, but it was different with the French Government. It did not pain or

grieve me that they were taxed and heavy losers by the Rebels, and the rules of blockade ought not in my opinion to be relaxed for their benefit.

Mr. Seward was, I saw, discomfited, and he no doubt thinks me impolitic, unpractical, and too unyielding and severe to successfully administer the Government. I on the other hand deem it a misfortune that at a period like this there should be any disposition to temporize and indulge in expedients of a questionable character or loose and inconsiderate practices. "What we have most to fear," said Sir Vernon Harcourt, "is not that America will yield too little, but that we shall accept too much." It was not, nor will it be, my conduct that prompts this humiliating characterizing of the American Government. No improper concessions will be made by me to France or her Minister.

Neither Seward nor Stanton was at the Cabinet-meeting. Mr. Bates has left for Missouri. The President was with General Hooker at the War Department when we met, but soon came in. His countenance was sad and careworn, and impressed me painfully. Nothing of special interest was submitted. The accustomed rumor in regard to impending military operations continues.

Chase, who evidently was not aware that General Hooker was in Washington until I mentioned it, seemed surprised and left abruptly. I tried to inspire a little cheerfulness and pleasant feeling by alluding to the capture of the Fingal. For a few moments there was animation and interest, but when the facts were out and the story told there was no new topic and the bright feelings subsided. Believing the President desired to be with General Hooker, who has come in suddenly and unexpectedly and for some as yet undisclosed reason, I withdrew. Blair left with me. He is much dispirited and dejected. We had ten or fifteen minutes' talk as we came away. He laments that the President does not advise more with all his Cabinet, deprecates the bad influence of Seward, and Chase, and Stanton, Halleck, and Hooker.

Had two interviews with Dahlgren to-day in regard to his duties as successor of Du Pont in command of the South Atlantic Squadron. Enjoined upon him to let me at no time remain ignorant of his views if they underwent any change, or should be different in any respect from mine or the policy proposed. Told him there must be frankness and absolute sincerity between us in the discharge of his official duties, — no reserve though we might differ. I must know, truthfully, what he was doing, what he proposed doing, and have his frank and honest opinions at all times. He concurs, and I trust there will be no misunderstanding.

My intercourse and relations with Dahlgren have been individually satisfactory. The partiality of the President has sometimes embarrassed me and given D. promotion and prominence which may prove a misfortune in the end. It has gained him no friends in the profession, for the officers feel and know he has attained naval honors without naval claims or experience. He has intelligence and ability without question; his nautical qualities are disputed; his skill, capacity, courage, daring, sagacity, and comprehensiveness in a high command are to be tested. He is intensely ambitious, and, I fear, too selfish. He has the heroism which proceeds from pride and would lead him to danger and to death, but whether he has the innate, unselfish courage of the genuine sailor and soldier remains to be seen. I think him exact and a good disciplinarian, and the President regards him with special favor. In periods of trying difficulties here, from the beginning of the Rebellion, he has never failed me. He would, I know, gallantly sustain his chief anywhere and make a good second in command, such as I wished to make him when I proposed that he should be associated with Foote. As a bureau officer he is capable and intelligent, but he shuns and evades responsibility. This may be his infirmity in his new position.

The official reports of the capture of the Fingal, *alias* Atlanta, are very gratifying and confirm our estimate of

the value of the monitor class of vessels and the fifteen-inch guns. The Department, and I, as its head, have been much abused for both. Ericsson, the inventor of the monitor or turret vessels, wanted a twenty-inch gun. His theory is impregnability in a vessel and immense calibre for his guns, which shall be irresistible. Dahlgren would not himself consent to take the responsibility of more than a thirteen-inch gun. Fox and Admiral Smith favored a fifteen-inch, which the Department adopted, though with some hesitation, without the approval of D., the Ordnance Officer, who, however, did not remonstrate against it, but went forward under orders, the responsibility being with me and not on him.

June 24, *Wednesday.* Admiral Foote still lingers, but there is no hope of his recovery. Dahlgren took leave this morning for the South Atlantic Squadron. I admonished him that his detachment from the Bureau was only temporary and for a special purpose, and wished him a prosperous and successful time.

No definite or satisfactory information in regard to military movements. If it were clear that the Secretary of War and General-in-Chief knew and were directing military movements intelligently, it would be a relief; but they communicate nothing and really appear to have little or nothing to communicate. What at any time surprises us, surprises them. There is no cordiality between them and Hooker, not an identity of views and action, such as should exist between the general in command in the field and the Headquarters and Department, separated only a few miles. The consequence is an unhappy and painful anxiety and uncertainty, the more distressing to those of us who should know and are measurably responsible, because we ought to be acquainted with the facts. Were we not in that position, we should be more at ease.

None of our vessels have succeeded in capturing the Rebel pirate Tacony, which has committed great ravages

along the coast, although I have sent out over twenty vessels in search. Had she been promptly taken, I should have been blamed for such a needless and expensive waste of strength; now I shall be censured for not doing more.

June 25, *Thursday.* A special messenger from Mr. Felton, President of the Philadelphia & Baltimore Railroad, called on me this morning before breakfast, with a request I would send a gunboat to Havre de Grace to protect the ferryboat, railroad property, and public travel. He says Rebels are in the vicinity in disguise, concerting measures for mischief. The War Department and military authorities, who should know, are not informed on these matters, and I must exercise my own judgment. There is sensitiveness in the public mind, and security is sought sometimes unnecessarily, but my conviction is there may be cause for apprehension in this instance. I have therefore ordered a gunboat from the Potomac Flotilla to the point indicated and notified Mr. Felton.

Word is sent me by a credible person who left Hagerstown last evening that Ewell and Longstreet with their divisions passed through that place yesterday to invade Pennsylvania with sixty thousand men. The number is probably exaggerated, but I am inclined to believe there may be half that number, perhaps more. Where in the mean time is General Hooker and our army? I get nothing satisfactory from Headquarters or Stanton.

The President to-day approved my placing the Bureau of Equipment and Recruiting in temporary charge of Commander Smith, and the Ordnance Bureau in charge of Commander Wise.

Mr. Stanton called on me this morning and stated he had made an arrangement with John C. Rives to publish a military journal which he proposed to call the *Army and Navy Gazette.* He wished it to embrace both branches of the service unless I objected. The entire expense, over and above the receipts, whatever they may be, should be borne

by the War Department. I told him I of course could make no objection to the name, and if the orders, reports, official papers, and current news were regularly and correctly published there would be some conveniences attending it. The proposition was, however, novel to me, and I knew of no law to warrant it or of any appropriation to defray the expense. I should therefore decline any pecuniary, official, or personal responsibility, or any connection with it. He assured me he did not expect or wish me to incur any part of the expense or responsibility.

June 26, *Friday*. The conduct and course of Admiral Du Pont leaves no doubt on my mind that he intends to occupy a position antagonistic to the Department. Fox, who has been his special friend, is of the same opinion. He suggested to me yesterday that the capture of the Fingal presented to me a good opportunity to give Rodgers credit, and in turning the subject over, we both concluded that the letter might be so framed as to detach him, and perhaps others whom the Admiral has sought to attach to and make part of his clique. Fox caught the points earnestly and brought me his ideas in the rough form of a letter. His views were very good and I embodied them in a congratulatory commendation to Rodgers on his services.

Rumors are rife concerning the army. If Hooker has generalship in him, this is his opportunity. He can scarcely fail of a triumph. The President in a single remark to-day betrayed doubts of Hooker, to whom he is quite partial. "We cannot help beating them, if we have the man. How much depends in military matters on one master mind! Hooker may commit the same fault as McClellan and lose his chance. We shall soon see, but it appears to me he can't help but win."

A pretty full discussion of Vallandigham's case and of the committee from Ohio which is here, ostensibly in his behalf, but really to make factious party strength. Blair is for letting them return, — turning him loose, — says he

will damage his own friends. The President would have no objections but for the effect it might have in relaxing army discipline, and disgusting the patriotic sentiment and feeling of the country, which holds V. in abhorrence.

Blair assures me that Seward and H. Seymour have an understanding, are acting in concert. Says Stanton is beholden to Seward, who sustains him. Both he denounces. They are opposed to putting McClellan in position, fearing he will be a formidable Presidential candidate. Their conduct is forcing him to be a candidate, when he has no inclination that way. The tendency of things, B. thinks, is to make McClellan and Chase candidates, and if so, he says, McC. will beat C. five to one. He tells me he visited McC. last winter with a view of bringing him here to take Halleck's place. The President was aware of his purpose. McC. assured him he had no Presidential aspirations; his desire was to be restored to his old military position. When B. returned from his successful mission to New York he found his plans frustrated, and the President unwilling to give them further consideration. Satisfied that Seward, whom he had made a confidant to some extent, had defeated his purpose, he embraced the first favorable opportunity, when returning in Seward's carriage on the night of the 3d of March from the Capitol, to charge Seward with not having acted in good faith in the transaction. B. says Seward sunk down in the corner of the carriage and made no reply.

June 27, *Saturday*. A telegram last night informed me of the death of Admiral Foote. The information of the last few days made it a not unexpected event, yet there was a shock when it came. Foote and myself were schoolboys together at Cheshire Academy under good old Dr. Bronson, and, though three or four years younger than myself, we were pursuing some of the same studies, and there then sprang up an attachment between us that never was broken. His profession interrupted our intimacy, but at

long intervals we occasionally met, and the recollection of youthful friendship made these meetings pleasant.

When I was called to take the administration of the Navy Department, he was Executive Officer at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and wrote me of the pleasure my appointment gave him. He soon visited Washington, when I consulted with him and procured in friendly confidence his estimate of various officers. This was before the affair of Sumter, and, like many others, he shortly after expressed a sad disappointment in regard to some he had commended. In fitting out in those early days the expeditions to Fort Sumter and Fort Pickens he exhibited that energy and activity which more fully displayed itself the following autumn and winter in creating and fighting the Mississippi Flotilla. His health became there impaired and his constitution was probably undermined before he took charge of the Bureau of Equipment and Recruiting. Our intercourse here was pleasant. His judgment in the main good, his intentions pure, and his conduct correct, manly, and firm. Towards me he exhibited a deference that was to me, who wished a revival and continuance of the friendly and social intimacy of earlier years, often painful. But the discipline of the sailor would not permit him to do differently, and when I once or twice spoke of it, he insisted it was proper, and said it was a sentiment which he felt even in our schoolday intercourse and friendship.

Shortly after the demonstration of Du Pont at Charleston, when I think Foote's disappointment was greater than my own, he tendered his services for any duty afloat. Some premonition of the disease which ended his life was then upon him, and made him believe more active employment than the Bureau afforded would conduce to his physical benefit. His wife, after he had once or twice alluded to the subject, which she did not favor, gave her consent that he should go wherever ordered, except to the Mississippi. Foote expressed regret that she should have made any exception.

ANDREW HULL FOOTE

He did not wish to supplant Du Pont, whom he admired, or take any part against that officer. He was not unaware, however, that the Department and the public would turn to him as the successor of the hero of Port Royal, should there be a change of commanders. I was desirous that both he and Dahlgren should go to that squadron, and it was finally so arranged, but Providence has ordered differently. I have been disappointed. Foote had a name and prestige which would have carried him into the place assigned him on the tide of popular favor, whatever might have been the intrigues and assaults on one or both of us from any quarter.

General Wool, Governor Morgan, and Mayor Opdyke make a combined effort to retain the Roanoke at New York, and write me most earnestly on the subject. The idea that New York is in danger is an absurdity, and, with a naval force always at the navy yard and in the harbor, and with forts and military force, is such a remote contingency that the most timid lady need not be, and is not, alarmed. Morgan and Opdyke, Governor and Mayor, have responsibilities that are perhaps excusable, but not General Wool, who feeds on panic and fosters excitement. It is made the duty of the military at all times to defend New York. The Army is sensitive of Navy interference in this specialty, but the Navy will render incidental aid, do all that is necessary; but the Army assumes the guardianship of the ports as the exclusive province of the military, independent of the Navy.

June 28, *Sunday.* The President convened the Cabinet at 10 A.M. and submitted his reply to the Vallandigham committee. Save giving too much notoriety and consequence to a graceless traitor who loves notoriety and office, and making the factious party men who are using him for the meanest purposes that could influence men in such a crisis conspicuous, the letter is well enough, and well conceived.

After disposing of this subject, the President drew from his pocket a telegram from General Hooker asking to be relieved. The President said he had, for several days as the conflict became imminent, observed in Hooker the same failings that were witnessed in McClellan after the Battle of Antietam, — a want of alacrity to obey, and a greedy call for more troops which could not, and ought not to be taken from other points. He would, said the President, strip Washington bare, had demanded the force at Harper's Ferry, which Halleck said could not be complied with; he (Halleck) was opposed to abandoning our position at Harper's Ferry. Hooker had taken umbrage at the refusal, or at all events had thought it best to give up the command.

Some discussion followed in regard to a successor. The names of Meade, Sedgwick, and Couch were introduced. I soon saw this review of names was merely a feeler to get an expression of opinion — a committal — or to make it appear that all were consulted. It shortly became obvious, however, that the matter had already been settled, and the President finally remarked he supposed General Halleck had issued the orders. He asked Stanton if it was not so. Stanton replied affirmatively, that Hooker had been ordered to Baltimore and Meade to succeed him. We were consulted after the fact.

Chase was disturbed more than he cared should appear. Seward and Stanton were obviously cognizant of what had been ordered before the meeting of the Cabinet took place, — had been consulted. Perhaps they had advised proceedings, but, doubtful of results, wished the rest to confirm their act. Blair and Bates were not present with us.

Instead of being disturbed, like Chase, I experienced a feeling of relief, and only regretted that Hooker, who I think has good parts, but is said to be intemperate at times, had not been relieved immediately after the Battle of Chancellorsville. No explanation has ever been made of the sudden paralysis which befell the army at that time. It

was then reported, by those who should have known, that it was liquor. I apprehend from what has been told me it was the principal cause. It was so intimated, but not distinctly asserted, in Cabinet.

Nothing has been communicated by the War Department, directly, but there has been an obvious dislike of Hooker, and no denial or refutation of the prevalent rumors. I have once or twice made inquiries of Stanton, but could get no satisfactory reply of any kind. . . . The War Department has been aware of these accusations, but has taken no pains to disprove or deny them, — perhaps because they could not be, perhaps because the War Department did not want to. The President has been partial to Hooker in all this time and has manifested no disposition to give him up, except a casual remark at the last Cabinet-meeting.

Whether the refusal to give him the troops at Harper's Ferry was intended to drive him to abandon the command of the army, or is in pursuance of any intention on the part of Halleck to control army movements, and to overrule the general in the field, is not apparent. The President has been drawn into the measure, as he was into withholding McDowell from McClellan, by being made to believe it was necessary for the security of Washington. In that instance, Stanton was the moving spirit, Seward assenting. It is much the same now, only Halleck is the forward spirit, prompted perhaps by Stanton.

Of Meade I know very little. He is not great. His brother officers speak well of him, but he is considered rather a "smooth bore" than a rifle. It is unfortunate that a change could not have been made earlier.

Chase immediately interested himself for the future of Hooker. Made a special request that he should be sent to Fortress Monroe to take charge of a demonstration upon Richmond via James River. The President did not give much attention to the suggestion. I inquired what was done, or doing, with Dix's command, — whether that con-

siderable force was coming here, going to Richmond, or to remain inactive. The President thought a blow might at this time be struck at Richmond; had not, however, faith much could be accomplished by Dix, but though not much of a general, there were reasons why he did not like to supersede him. Foster he looked to as a rising general who had maintained himself creditably at Washington, North Carolina. Chase admitted F. was deserving of credit, but claimed credit was due Sisson,[1] who relieved him, also.

Had two or three telegrams last night from Portland in relation to pirate privateers, which are cleared up to-day by information that Reed had seized the revenue cutter Calhoun, and was himself soon after captured.

The city is full of strange, wild rumors of Rebel raids in the vicinity and of trains seized in sight of the Capitol. They are doubtless exaggerations, yet I think not without some foundation. I am assured from men of truth that a Rebel scouting party was seen this morning in the rear of Georgetown. Just at sunset, the Blairs rode past my house to their city residence, not caring to remain at Silver Spring until the crisis is past.

A large portion of the Rebel army is unquestionably on this side the Potomac. The main body is, I think, in the Cumberland Valley, pressing on toward Harrisburg, but a small force has advanced toward Washington. The War Department is wholly unprepared for an irruption here, and J. E. B. Stuart might have dashed into the city to-day with impunity. In the mean time, Philadelphians and the Pennsylvanians are inert and inactive, indisposed to volunteer to defend even their own capital. Part of this I attribute to the incompetency of General Halleck to concentrate effort, acquire intelligence, or inspire confidence; part is due to the excitable Governor, who is easily alarmed and calls aloud for help on the remotest prospect of danger. He is very vigilant, — almost too vigilant for calm

[1] Colonel Henry T. Sisson, with his Fifth Rhode Island Volunteers, reinforced General Foster in the siege of Washington, North Carolina.

consideration and wise conclusion, or to have a commanding influence. Is not only anxious but susceptible, impressible, scary.

June 29, *Monday.* Great apprehension prevails. The change of commanders is thus far well received. No regret is expressed that Hooker has been relieved. This is because of the rumor of his habits, the reputation that he is intemperate, for his military reputation is higher than that of his successor. Meade has not so much character as such a command requires. He is, however, kindly favored; will be well supported, have the best wishes of all, but does not inspire immediate confidence. A little time may improve this, and give him name and fame.

Naval Order No. 16 on the death of Foote and the congratulatory letter to Rodgers have each been well received. The allusion to the character of the monitors was a questionable matter, but I thought it an opportunity to counteract Du Pont's mischief which should not pass unimproved. Some of the Rebel sympathizers assail that part of it, as I supposed they probably would. Of Foote I could have said more, but brevity is best on such occasions.

June 30, *Tuesday.* The President did not join us to-day in Cabinet. He was with the Secretary of War and General Halleck, and sent word there would be no meeting. This is wrong, but I know no remedy. At such a time as this, it would seem there should be free and constant intercourse and interchange of views, and a combined effort. The Government should not be carried on in the War or State Departments exclusively, nor ought there to be an attempt of that kind.

I understand from Chase that the President and Stanton are anxious that Dix should make a demonstration on Richmond, but Halleck does not respond favorably, — whether because he has not confidence in Dix, or himself, or from any cause, I do not know. This move on Rich-

mond is cherished by Chase, and with a bold, dashing, energetic, and able general might be effective, but I agree with the President that Dix is not the man for such a movement. Probably the best thing that can now be done, is to bring all who can be spared from garrison duty to the assistance of General Meade.

Lee and his army are well advanced into Pennsylvania, and they should not be permitted to fall back and recross the Potomac. Halleck is bent on driving them back, not on intercepting their retreat; is full of zeal to drive them out of Pennsylvania. I don't want them to leave the State, except as prisoners. Meade will, I trust, keep closer to them than some others have done. I understand his first order was for the troops at Harper's Ferry to join him, which was granted. Hooker asked this, but it was denied him by the War Department and General Halleck.

Blair is much dissatisfied. He came from the Executive Mansion with me to the Navy Department and wrote a letter to the President, urging that Dix's command should be immediately brought up. Says Halleck is good for nothing and knows nothing. I proposed that we should both walk over to the War Department, but he declined; said he would not go where Stanton could insult him, that he disliked at all times to go to the War Department, had not been there for a long period, although the Government of which he is a member is in these days carried on, almost, in the War Department.

We have no positive information that the Rebels have crossed the Susquehanna, though we have rumors to that effect. There is no doubt the bridge at Columbia, one and a half miles long, has been burnt, and, it seems, by our own people. The officer who ordered it must have been imbued with Halleck's tactics. I wish the Rebel army had got across before the bridge was burnt. But Halleck's prayers and efforts, especially his prayers, are to keep the Rebels back, — drive them back across the "frontiers" instead of intercepting, capturing, and annihilating them. This

movement of Lee and the Rebel forces into Pennsylvania is to me incomprehensible, nor do I get any light from military men or others in regard to it. Should they cross the Susquehanna, as our General-in-Chief and Governor Curtin fear, they will never recross it without being first captured. This they know, unless deceived by their sympathizing friends in the North, as in 1861; therefore I do not believe they will attempt it.

I have talked over this campaign with Stanton this evening, but I get nothing from him definite or satisfactory of fact or speculation, and I come to the conclusion that he is bewildered, that he gets no light from his military subordinates and advisers, and that he really has no information or opinion as to the Rebel destination or purpose.

X

First Reports of the Battle of Gettysburg — Stanton accused by McClellan of sacrificing the Army — F. P. Blair on Stanton's Early Secessionist Sympathies — Stanton's Treachery toward the Buchanan Administration — Seward's Intrigues — His Misconception of the War — Later News from Gettysburg — Vice-President Stephens's Proposed Mission to Washington — Intercepted Confederate Dispatches — Cabinet-Meeting on Stephens's Mission — Meade lingering at Gettysburg — The Fall of Vicksburg — Lincoln's Receipt of the News — Rejoicings over Gettysburg and Vicksburg — Vice-President Hamlin's Request for a Prize Court at Portland — Some of the Generals Content to have the War continue — Draft Riots — The President's Dejection at the Failure of Meade to capture Lee's Army — The Draft Riots in New York — Lee recrosses the Potomac — Prospects of an Early Ending to the War — An Estimate of Jefferson Davis — Calhoun and Nullification — Senator Hale's Hostility — Downfall of the Mexican Republic — Impressions of Colonel Rawlins of Grant's Staff — Grant's Dissatisfaction with McClernand.

July 1, *Wednesday.* We have reports that the Rebels have fallen back from York, and I shall not be surprised if they escape capture, or even a second fight, though we have rumors of hard fighting to-day.

July 2, *Thursday.* A telegram this morning advises me of the death of General R. C. Hale, the brother of Mrs. Welles, at Reedsville in the County of Mifflin, Pennsylvania. He was the efficient Quartermaster-General of Pennsylvania, a good officer and capable and upright man. The public never had a more faithful and honest officer.

Met Sumner and went with him to the War Department. The President was there, and we read dispatches received from General Meade. There was a smart fight, but without results, near Gettysburg yesterday. A rumor is here that we have captured six thousand prisoners, and on calling again this evening at the War Department I saw a telegram which confirms it. General Reynolds is reported killed. The tone of Meade's dispatch is good.

Met the elder Blair this evening at his son's, the Postmaster-General. The old gentleman has been compelled to leave his pleasant home at Silver Spring, his house being in range of fire and Rebel raiders at his door. He tells me McClellan wrote Stanton after the seven days' fight near Richmond that he (Stanton) had sacrificed that army. Stanton replied cringingly, and in a most supplicating manner, assuring McClellan he, Stanton, was his true friend. Mr. F. P. Blair assures me he has seen the letters. He also says he has positive, unequivocal testimony that Stanton acted with the Secessionists early in the War and favored a division of the Union. He mentions a conversation at John Lee's house, where Stanton set forth the advantages that would follow from a division.

Mr. Montgomery Blair said Stanton was talking Secession to one class, and holding different language to another; that while in Buchanan's Cabinet he communicated Toucey's treason to Jake Howard and secretly urged the arrest of Toucey. During the winter of 1860 and 1861, Stanton was betraying the Buchanan Administration to Seward, disclosing its condition and secrets, and that for his treachery to his then associates and his becoming the tool of Seward, he was finally brought into the present Cabinet.

These things I have heard from others also, and there have been some facts and circumstances to corroborate them within my own knowledge. Mr. Seward, who has no very strong convictions and will never sacrifice his life for an opinion, had no belief that the insurrection would be serious or of long continuance. Familiar with the fierce denunciations and contentions of parties in New York, where he had, from his prominent position and strong adherents, been accustomed to excite and direct, and then modify, the excesses roused by anti-Masonry and anti-rent outbreaks by pliable and liberal action, he entertained no doubt that he should have equal success in bringing about a satisfactory result in national affairs by meeting exaction with concessions. He was strengthened in this by

the fact that there was no adequate cause for a civil war, or for the inflammatory, excited, and acrimonious language which flowed from his heated associates in Congress. Through the infidelity of Stanton he learned the feelings and designs of the Buchanan Administration, which were not of the ultra character of the more impassioned Secession leaders. One of the Cabinet already paid court to him; Dix[1] and some others he knew were not disunionists; and, never wanting faith in his own skill and management, he intended, if his opponents would not go with him, as the last alternative to go with them and call a convention to remodel the Constitution. Until some weeks after Mr. Lincoln's inauguration Seward never doubted that he could by some expedient — a convention or otherwise — allay the storm. Some who ultimately went into the Rebellion also hoped it. Both he and they overestimated his power and influence. Stanton in the winter of 1861 whispered in his ear state secrets, it was understood, because Seward was to be first in the Cabinet of Lincoln, who was already elected. The Blairs charge Stanton with infidelity to party and to country from mere selfish considerations, and with being by nature treacherous and wholly unreliable. Were any overwhelming adversity to befall the country, they look upon him as ready to betray it.

July 3, *Friday*. I met the President and Seward at the War Department this morning. A dispatch from General Meade, dated 3 P.M. yesterday, is in very good tone. The Sixth Army Corps, he says, was just arriving entire but exhausted, having been on the march from 9 P.M. of the preceding evening. In order that they may rest and recruit, he will not attack, but is momentarily expecting an onset from the Rebels.

They were concentrating for a fight, and, unless Meade is greatly deceived, there will be a battle in the neighborhood of Gettysburg. I hope our friends are not deceived so that

[1] John A. Dix, Secretary of the Treasury in 1861.

the Rebel trains with their plunder can escape through the valley.

July 4, *Saturday*. I was called up at midnight precisely by a messenger with telegram from Byington, dated at Hanover Station, stating that the most terrific battle of the War was being fought at or near Gettysburg, that he left the field at half-past 6 P.M. with tidings, and that everything looked hopeful. The President was at the War Department, where this dispatch, which is addressed to me, was received. It was the first word of the great conflict. Nothing had come to the War Department. There seems to have been no system, no arrangement, for prompt, constant, and speedy intelligence. I had remained at the War Department for news until about eleven. Some half an hour later the dispatch from Byington to me came over the wires, but nothing from any one to Stanton or Halleck. The operator in the War Department gave the dispatch to the President, who remained. He asked, "Who is Byington?" None in the Department knew anything of him, and the President telegraphed to Hanover Station, asking, "Who is Byington?" The operator replied, "Ask the Secretary of the Navy." I informed the President that the telegram was reliable. Byington is the editor and proprietor of a weekly paper in Norwalk, Connecticut, active and stirring; is sometimes employed by the *New York Tribune*, and is doubtless so employed now.

The information this morning and dispatches from General Meade confirm Byington's telegram. There is much confusion in the intelligence received. The information is not explicit. A great and bloody battle was fought, and our army has the best of it, but the end is not yet. Everything, however, looks encouraging.

Later in the day dispatches from Haupt and others state that Lee with his army commenced a retreat this A.M. at three o'clock. Our army is waiting for supplies to come up before following, — a little of the old lagging infirmity.

Couch is said to be dilatory; has not left Harrisburg; his force has not pushed forward with alacrity. Meade sent him word, "The sound of my guns should have prompted your movement." Lee and the Rebels may escape in consequence. If they are driven back, Halleck will be satisfied. That has been his great anxiety, and too many of our officers think it sufficient if the Rebels quit and go off, — that it is unnecessary to capture, disperse, and annihilate them.

Extreme partisans fear that the success of our arms will be success to the Administration. Governor Curtin is in trepidation, lest, if our troops leave Harrisburg to join Meade, the Rebels will rush in behind them and seize the Pennsylvania capital. On the other hand, Stanton and Halleck ridicule the sensitiveness of the Governor, and are indifferent to his wishes and responsibilities. Of course, matters do not work well.

Received this evening a dispatch from Admiral Lee, stating he had a communication from A. H. Stephens,[1] who wishes to go to Washington with a companion as military commissioner from Jefferson Davis, Commanding General of Confederate forces, to Abraham Lincoln, President and Commanding General of the Army and Navy of the United States, and desires permission to pass the blockade in the steamer Torpedo on this mission, with Mr. Olds, his private secretary. Showed the dispatch to Blair, whom I met. He made no comment. Saw Stanton directly after, who swore and growled indignantly. The President was at the Soldiers' Home and not expected for an hour or two. Consulted Seward, who was emphatic against having anything to do with Stephens or Davis. Did not see the President till late. In the mean time Stanton and others had seen him, and made known their feelings and views. The President treats the subject as not very serious nor very important, and proposes to take it up to-morrow. My own impression is that not much good is intended in this proposition, yet it is to be met and considered. It is not

[1] Vice-President of the Confederacy.

necessary that the vessel should pass the blockade, or that Stephens should come here, but I would not repel advances, or refuse to receive Davis's communication.

I learn from Admiral Lee that General Keyes with 12,000 men has moved forward from the "White House" towards Richmond, and other demonstrations are being made.

Two intercepted dispatches were received, captured by Captain Dahlgren. One was from Jeff Davis, the other from Adjutant-General Cooper, both addressed to General Lee. They disclose trouble and differences among the Rebel leaders. Lee, it seems, had an understanding with Cooper that Beauregard should concentrate a force of 40,000 at Culpeper for a demonstration, or something more, on Washington, when the place became uncovered by the withdrawal of the Army of the Potomac in pursuit of Lee. Davis appears not to have been informed of this military arrangement, nor satisfied with the programme when informed of it. Lee is told of the difficulty of defending Richmond and other places, and that he must defend his own lines, instead of relying upon its being done from Richmond.

July 5, *Sunday*. A Cabinet-meeting to-day at 11 A.M. The principal topic was the mission of Alexander H. Stephens. The President read a letter from Colonel Ludlow, United States Agent for exchange of prisoners, to Secretary Stanton, stating that Stephens had made a communication to Admiral Lee, which the Admiral had sent to the Secretary of the Navy. After reading them, the President said he was at first disposed to put this matter aside without many words, or much thought, but a night's reflection and some remarks yesterday had modified his views. While he was opposed to having Stephens and his vessel come here, he thought it would be well to send some one — perhaps go himself — to Fortress Monroe. Both Seward and Stanton were startled when this remark was made.

Seward did not think it advisable the President should go, nor any one else; he considered Stephens a dangerous man, who would make mischief anywhere. The most he (Seward) would do would be to allow Stephens to forward any communication through General Dix. Seward passes by Admiral Lee and the Navy Department, through whom the communication originally came. Stanton was earnest and emphatic against having anything to do with Stephens, or Jeff Davis, or their communication. Chase was decided against having any intercourse with them. Blair took a different view. He would not permit Stephens to come here with his staff, but would receive any communication he bore, and in such a case as this, he would not cavil about words. Something more important was involved.

While this discussion was going on, I wrote a brief answer to Lee, and said to the President I knew not why Colonel Ludlow was intruded as the medium of communication, or General Dix, — that neither of them was in any way connected with this transaction. Admiral Lee, in command of the blockading force, received a communication from Mr. Stephens, and had made known to the Navy Department, under whose orders he is acting, the application of the gentleman who had a mission to perform, and was now with Admiral Lee waiting an answer. In this stage of the proceeding, the Secretary of State proposes that Admiral Lee should be ignored, and the subject transferred from the Navy to some military officer, or one of his staff. Was it because Admiral Lee was incompetent, or not to be trusted? Admiral Lee has informed Stephens he cannot be permitted to pass until he has instructions from the Navy Department. Nothing definite has yet been suggested in reply. He and the parties are waiting to hear from me, and I propose to take some notice of his application, and, unless the President objects, send an answer as follows to Admiral Lee: —

"The object of the communication borne by Mr. Stephens is not stated or intimated. It is not expedient

from this indefinite information that you should permit that gentleman to pass the blockade with the Torpedo."

None of the gentlemen adopted or assented to this, nor did they approximate to unity or anything definite on any point. After half an hour's discussion and disagreement, I read what I had pencilled to the President, who sat by me on the sofa. Under the impression that I took the same view as Chase and Stanton, he did not adopt it. Seward, in the mean time, had reconsidered his proposition that the communication should be received, and thought with Stanton it would be best to have nothing to do with the mission in any way. The President was apprehensive my letter had that tendency. Mr. Blair thought my suggestion the most practical of anything submitted. Chase said he should be satisfied with it. Stanton the same. Seward thought that both Stanton and myself had better write, each separate answers, Stanton to Ludlow and I to Lee, but to pretty much the same effect.

The President said my letter did not dispose of the communication which Stephens bore. I told him the dispatch did not exclude it. Though objection was made to any communication, an answer must be sent Admiral Lee. Everything was purposely left open, so that Stephens could, if he chose, state or intimate his object. I left the dispatch indefinite in consequence of the diversity of opinion among ourselves, but that I had not the least objection, and should for myself prefer to add, "I am directed by the President to say that any communication which Mr. Stephens may have can be forwarded."

This addendum did not, as I knew it would not, meet the views entertained by some of the gentlemen. The President prefers that a special messenger should be sent to meet Stephens, to which I see no serious objection, but which no one favors. I do not anticipate anything frank, manly, or practical in this mission, though I do not think Stephens so dangerous a man as Mr. Seward represents him. It is a scheme without doubt, — possibly for good,

perhaps for evil, — but I would meet it in a manner not offensive, nor by a rude refusal would I give the Rebels and their sympathizers an opportunity to make friends at our expense or to our injury. This, I think, is the President's purpose. Mr. Blair would perhaps go farther than myself, the others not so far. We must not put ourselves in the wrong by refusing to communicate with these people. On the other hand, there is difficulty in meeting and treating with men who have violated their duty, disregarded their obligations, and who lack sincerity.

I ought to answer Lee, and, because I have not, Ludlow and Dix have been applied to. Seward will make the Secretary of War or himself the medium and not the Secretary of the Navy, — Ludlow or Dix, not Admiral Lee. I proposed to inform Admiral Lee that his communication should be answered to-morrow, it having been decided we would not reply to-day. Seward said the subject would not spoil by keeping. The President thought it best to send no word until we gave a conclusive answer to-morrow.

At 5 P.M. I received a telegram that the Torpedo with Mr. Stephens had gone up the river. Another telegram at eight said she had returned.

July 6, *Monday*. There was a special Cabinet-meeting at 9 A.M. on the subject of A. H. Stephens's mission. Seward came prepared with a brief telegram, which the President had advised, to the effect that Stephens's request to come to W. was inadmissible, but any military communication should be made through the prescribed military channel. A copy of this answer was to be sent to the military officer in command at Fortress Monroe by the Secretary of War, and the Secretary of the Navy was to send a copy to Admiral Lee. The President directed Mr. Seward to go to the telegraph office and see that they were correctly transmitted. All this was plainly prearranged by Seward, who has twice changed his ground, differing with the President when Chase and Stanton differed, but he is finally com-

missioned to carry out the little details which could be done by an errand boy or clerk.

The army news continues to be favorable. Lee is on the retreat, and Meade in hot pursuit, each striving to get possession of the passes of the Potomac.

A note from Wilkes stating he had reached home, and would have reported in person but had received an injury. A letter is published in one of the papers, purporting to be from him at Havana, written by himself or at his instigation, expressing a hope that Lardner, his successor, will be furnished with men and more efficient vessels. I hope so too. Wilkes has not had so large a force as I wished; he could not under any circumstances have had so large a squadron as he desired. To say nothing of the extensive blockade, Farragut's detention through the winter and spring before Vicksburg was unexpected, and the operations before Charleston have been long and protracted.

The papers this evening bring us the speeches of the two Seymours, Horatio and Thomas Henry, on the Fourth at New York. A couple of partisan patriots, neither of whom is elated by Meade's success, and whose regrets are over Rebel reverses.

July 7, *Tuesday.* The President said this morning, with a countenance indicating sadness and despondency, that Meade still lingered at Gettysburg, when he should have been at Hagerstown or near the Potomac, to cut off the retreating army of Lee. While unwilling to complain and willing and anxious to give all praise to the general and army for the great battle and victory, he feared the old idea of driving the Rebels out of Pennsylvania and Maryland, instead of capturing them, was still prevalent among the officers. He hoped this was not so, said he had spoken to Halleck and urged that the right tone and spirit should be infused into officers and men, and that General Meade especially should be reminded of his (the President's) wishes and expectations. But General Halleck gave him

a short and curt reply, showing that he did not participate and sympathize in this feeling, and, said the President, "I drop the subject."

This is the President's error. His own convictions and conclusions are infinitely superior to Halleck's, — even in military operations more sensible and more correct always, — but yet he says, "It being strictly a military question, it is proper I should defer to Halleck, whom I have called here to counsel, advise, and direct in these matters, where he is an expert." I question whether he should be considered an expert. I look upon Halleck as a pretty good scholarly critic of other men's deeds and acts, but as incapable of originating or directing military operations.

When I returned from the Cabinet council I found a delegation from Maine at the Department, consisting of Vice-President Hamlin, the two Senators from that State, and Senator Wilson of Massachusetts. These gentlemen had first waited on the President in regard to the coast defenses and protection of the fishermen, and were referred by him to me instead of the army, which claims to defend the harbors. At the moment of receiving this delegation I was handed a dispatch from Admiral Porter, communicating the fall of Vicksburg on the fourth of July. Excusing myself to the delegation, I immediately returned to the Executive Mansion. The President was detailing certain points relative to Grant's movements on the map to Chase and two or three others, when I gave him the tidings. Putting down the map, he rose at once, said we would drop these topics, and "I myself will telegraph this news to General Meade." He seized his hat, but suddenly stopped, his countenance beaming with joy; he caught my hand, and, throwing his arm around me, exclaimed: "What can we do for the Secretary of the Navy for this glorious intelligence? He is always giving us good news. I cannot, in words, tell you my joy over this result. It is great, Mr. Welles, it is great!"

We walked across the lawn together. "This," said he,

"will relieve Banks. It will inspire me." The opportunity I thought a good one to request him to insist upon his own views, to enforce them, not only on Meade but on Halleck.

July 8, *Wednesday*. There was a serenade last night in honor of the success of our arms at Gettysburg and Vicksburg. The last has excited a degree of enthusiasm not excelled during the war. The serenade was got up for a purpose. As a matter of course the first music was at the President's. Mr. Seward's friend, General Martindale, arranged matters, and a speech of Mr. Seward duly prepared was loudly delivered, but the music did not do him the honors. To Mr. Secretary Stanton and Major-General Halleck they discoursed sweet sounds, and each responded in characteristic remarks. No allusion was made by either of them to the Navy, or its services. General Halleck never by a scratch of his pen, or by a word from his mouth, ever awarded any credit to the Navy for anything. I am not aware that his sluggish mind has ever done good of any kind to the country.

The rejoicing in regard to Vicksburg is immense. Admiral Porter's brief dispatch to me was promptly transmitted over the whole country, and led, everywhere, to spontaneous gatherings, firing of guns, ringing of bells, and general gratification and gladness. The price of gold, to use the perverted method of speech, fell ten or fifteen cents and the whole country is joyous. I am told, however, that Stanton is excessively angry because Admiral Porter heralded the news to me in advance of General Grant to the War Department. The telegraph office is in the War Department Building, which has a censorship over all that passes or is received. Everything goes under the Secretary's eye, and he craves to announce all important information. In these matters of announcing news he takes as deep an interest as in army movements which decide the welfare of the country.

The Potomac is swollen by the late heavy rains, and the

passage of the Rebel army is rendered impossible for several days. They are short of ammunition. In the mean time our generals should not lose their opportunity. I trust they will not. Providence favors them. Want of celerity, however, has been one of the infirmities of some of our generals in all this war. Stanton and Halleck should stimulate the officers to press forward at such a time as this, but I fear that they are engaged in smaller matters and they will be more unmindful of these which are more important. Halleck's policy consists in stopping the enemy's advance, or in driving the enemy back, — never to capture. Enough has been said to S. and H. to make them aware of the urgency of the President and Cabinet, and I trust it may have a good effect, but I do not learn that anything extra is being done. The President says he is rebuffed when he undertakes to push matters.

I yesterday informed Vice-President Hamlin and the Maine Senators we should try to keep a couple of steamers and two sailing-vessels cruising off New England during the fishing season; that we could not furnish a gunboat to every place; that the shore defenses belonged properly to the War Department, etc. They on the whole seemed satisfied.

The President sends me a strange letter from Hamlin, asking as a *personal* favor that prizes may be sent to Portland for adjudication, — says *he* has not had many favors, asks this on *personal* grounds. Mr. Hamlin spoke on this subject to me, — said the President referred it to me; — and both he and Mr. Fessenden made a strong local appeal in behalf of Portland. I informed them that such a matter was not to be disposed of on personal grounds or local favoritism; that Portsmouth, Providence, New Haven, and other places had equal claims, if there were any claims, but that public consideration must govern, and not personal favoritism; that additional courts would involve great additional expense; that we had no navy yard or station at Portland, with officers to whom the captors

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could report, no prison to confine prisoners, no naval constructors or engineers to examine captured vessels, etc., etc. These facts, while they somewhat staggered the gentlemen, quieted Fessenden, but did not cause Hamlin, who is rapacious as a wolf, to abate his demand for government favors. He wanted these paraphernalia, these extra persons, extra boards, and extra expenditures at Portland, and solicited them of the President, as special to himself personally.

July 9, *Thursday*. The Secretary of War and General Halleck are much dissatisfied that Admiral Porter should have sent me information of the capture of Vicksburg in advance of any word from General Grant, and also with me for spreading it at once over the country without verification from the War Office.

July 10, *Friday*. I am assured that our army is steadily, but I fear too slowly, moving upon Lee and the Rebels. There are, I hope, substantial reasons for this tardiness. Why cannot our army move as rapidly as the Rebels? The high water in the river has stopped them, yet our troops do not catch up. It has been the misfortune of our generals to linger, never to avail themselves of success, — to waste, or omit to gather, the fruits of victory. Only success at Gettysburg and Vicksburg will quiet the country for the present hesitancy. No light or explanation is furnished by the General-in-Chief or the War Department.

July 11, *Saturday*. Am sorry to see in the *New York Tribune* an attempt to compliment me by doing injustice to Mr. Seward. On the question of the French tobacco we differed. I think it should remain in Richmond until the blockade is raised. In regard to the claims of Spain to a maritime jurisdiction of six miles, Mr. S., though at first confused and perplexed, seemed relieved by my suggestion. I apprehend that Mr. Fox, who is intimate with one of the

correspondents of the *Tribune*, may, with the best intentions to myself, have said something which led to the article. It may have been Mr. Sumner, who is acquainted with the facts, and often tells the newspaper people things they ought not to know and publish.

I fear the Rebel army will escape, and am compelled to believe that some of our generals are willing it should. They are contented to have the War continue. Never before have they been so served nor their importance so felt and magnified, and when the War is over but few of them will retain their present importance.

I directed Colonel Harris a few days since to instruct the Marine Band when performing on public days to give us more martial and national music. This afternoon they begun strong. Nicolay soon came to me aggrieved; wanted more finished music to cultivate and refine the popular taste, — German and Italian airs, etc. Told him I was no proficient, but his refined music entertained the few effeminate and the refined; it was insipid to most of our fighting men, inspired no hearty zeal or rugged purpose. In days of peace we could lull into sentimentality, but should shake it off in these days. Martial music and not operatic airs are best adapted to all.

July 13, *Monday.* The army is still at rest. Halleck stays here in Washington, within four hours of the army, smoking his cigar, doing as little as the army. If he gives orders for an onward movement and is not obeyed, why does he not remove to headquarters in the field? If this army is permitted to escape across the Potomac, woe be to those who permit it!

The forces which were on the Pamunkey have been ordered up and are passing through Baltimore to the great army, which is already too large, four times as large as the Rebels, who have been driven on to the banks of the Potomac, and are waiting for the river to fall, so that they can get back into Virginia without being captured or

molested, — and Meade is waiting to have them. Drive them back, is Halleck's policy.

Wrote a congratulatory letter to Porter on the fall of Vicksburg. Called on the President and advised that Porter should be made a rear-admiral. He assented very cheerfully, though his estimate of Porter is not so high as mine. Stanton denies him any merit; speaks of him as a gas-bag, who makes a great fuss and claims credit that belongs to others. Chase, Seward, and Blair agree with me that Porter has done good service. I am aware of his infirmities. He is selfish, presuming, and wasteful, but is brave and energetic.

July 14, *Tuesday*. We have accounts of mobs, riots, and disturbances in New York and other places in consequence of the Conscription Act. Our information is very meagre; two or three mails are due; the telegraph is interrupted. There have been powerful rains which have caused great damage to the railroads and interrupted all land communication between this and Baltimore.

There are, I think, indubitable evidences of concert in these riotous movements, beyond the accidental and impulsive outbreak of a mob, or mobs. Lee's march into Pennsylvania, the appearance of several Rebel steamers off the coast, the mission of A. H. Stephens to Washington, seem to be parts of one movement, have one origin, are all concerted schemes between the Rebel leaders and Northern sympathizing friends, — the whole put in operation when the Government is enforcing the conscription. This conjunction is not all accidental, but parts of a great plan. In the midst of all this and as a climax comes word that Lee's army has succeeded in recrossing the Potomac. If there had been an understanding between the mob conspirators, the Rebels, and our own officers, the combination of incidents could not have been more advantageous to the Rebels.

The Cabinet-meeting was not full to-day. Two or three

of us were there, when Stanton came in with some haste and asked to see the President alone. The two were absent about three minutes in the library. When they returned, the President's countenance indicated trouble and distress; Stanton was disturbed, disconcerted. Usher asked Stanton if he had bad news. He said, "No." Something was said of the report that Lee had crossed the river. Stanton said abruptly and curtly he knew nothing of Lee's crossing. "I do," said the President emphatically, with a look of painful rebuke to Stanton. "If he has not got all of his men across, he soon will."

The President said he did not believe we could take up anything in Cabinet to-day. Probably none of us were in a right frame of mind for deliberation; he was not. He wanted to see General Halleck at once. Stanton left abruptly. I retired slowly. The President hurried and overtook me. We walked together across the lawn to the Departments and stopped and conversed a few moments at the gate. He said, with a voice and countenance which I shall never forget, that he had dreaded yet expected this; that there has seemed to him for a full week a determination that Lee, though we had him in our hands, should escape with his force and plunder. "And that, my God, is the last of this Army of the Potomac! There is bad faith somewhere. Meade has been pressed and urged, but only one of his generals was for an immediate attack, was ready to pounce on Lee; the rest held back. What does it mean, Mr. Welles? Great God! what does it mean?" I asked what orders had gone from him, while our troops had been quiet with a defeated and broken army in front, almost destitute of ammunition, and an impassable river to prevent their escape. He could not say that anything positive had been done, but both Stanton and Halleck professed to agree with him and he thought Stanton did. Halleck was all the time wanting to hear from Meade. "Why," said I, "he is within four hours of Meade. Is it not strange that he has not been up there to advise and

encourage him?" I stated I had observed the inertness, if not incapacity, of the General-in-Chief, and had hoped that he, who had better and more correct views, would issue peremptory orders. The President immediately softened his tone and said: "Halleck knows better than I what to do. He is a military man, has had a military education. I brought him here to give me military advice. His views and mine are widely different. It is better that I, who am not a military man, should defer to him, rather than he to me." I told the President I did not profess to be a military man, but there were some things on which I could form perhaps as correct an opinion as General Halleck, and I believed that he, the President, could more correctly, certainly more energetically, direct military movements than Halleck, who, it appeared to me, could originate nothing, and was, as now, all the time waiting to hear from Meade, or whoever was in command.

I can see that the shadows which have crossed my mind have clouded the President's also. On only one or two occasions have I ever seen the President so troubled, so dejected and discouraged.

Two hours later I went to the War Department. The President lay upon a sofa in Stanton's room, completely absorbed, overwhelmed with the news. He was, however, though subdued and sad, calm and resolute. Stanton had asked me to come over and read Dana's[1] report of the materials found at Vicksburg. The amount is very great, and the force was large. Thirty-one thousand two hundred prisoners have been paroled. Had Meade attacked and captured the army above us, as I verily believe he might have done, the Rebellion would have been ended. He was disposed to attack, I am told, but yielded to his generals, who were opposed. If the war were over, those generals would drop into subordinate positions.

July 15, *Wednesday*. We have the back mails this

[1] Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War.

morning. The papers are filled with accounts of mobs, riots, burnings, and murders in New York. There have been outbreaks to resist the draft in several other places. This is anarchy, — the fruit of the seed sown by the Seymours and others. In New York, Gov. Horatio Seymour is striving — probably earnestly now — to extinguish the flames he has contributed to kindle. Unless speedy and decisive measures are taken, the government and country will be imperiled. These concerted outbreaks and schemes to resist the laws must not be submitted to or treated lightly. An example should be made of some of the ringleaders and the mob dispersed. It is reported that the draft is ordered to be stopped. I hope this is untrue. If the mob has the ascendency and controls the action of the government, lawful authority has come to an end. In all this time no Cabinet-meeting takes place.

Seward called on me to-day with the draft of a Proclamation for Thanksgiving on the 29th inst. With Meade's failure to capture or molest Lee in his retreat and with mobs to reject the laws, it was almost a mockery, yet we have much to be thankful for. A wise Providence guards us and will, it is hoped, overrule the weakness and wickedness of men and turn their misdeeds to good.

I have dispatches this evening from Admiral Dahlgren with full report of operations on Morris Island. Although not entirely successful, his dispatch reads much more satisfactorily than the last ones of Du Pont.

We hear through Rebel channels of the surrender of Port Hudson. It was an inevitable necessity, and the rumors correspond with our anticipations.

July 16, *Thursday*. It is represented that the mob in New York is about subdued. Why it was permitted to continue so long and commit such excess has not been explained. Governor Seymour, whose partisans constituted the rioters, and whose partisanship encouraged them, has been in New York talking namby-pamby. This Sir

Forcible Feeble is himself chiefly responsible for the outrage.

General Wool, unfitted by age for such duties, though patriotic and well-disposed, has been continued in command there at a time when a younger and more vigorous mind was required. In many respects General Butler would at this time have best filled that position. As a municipal and police officer he has audacity and certain other qualities in which most military men are deficient, while as a general in the field he is likely to accomplish but little. He, or any one else, would need martial law at such a time, and with such element, in a crowded and disorderly city like New York. Chase tells me there will probably be a change and that General Dix will succeed General Wool. The selection is not a good one, but the influences that bring it about are evident. Seward and Stanton have arranged it. Chase thinks McDowell should have the position. He is as good, perhaps, as any of the army officers for this mixed municipal military duty.

Lee's army has recrossed the Potomac, unmolested, carrying off all its artillery and the property stolen in Pennsylvania. When I ask why such an escape was permitted, I am told that the generals opposed an attack. What generals? None are named. Meade is in command there; Halleck is General-in-Chief here. They should be held responsible. There are generals who, no doubt, will acquiesce without any regrets in having this war prolonged.

In this whole summer's campaign I have been unable to see, hear, or obtain evidence of power, or will, or talent, or originality on the part of General Halleck. He has suggested nothing, decided nothing, done nothing but scold and smoke and scratch his elbows. Is it possible the energies of the nation should be wasted by the incapacity of such a man?

John Rodgers of the Weehawken was here to-day. He is, I think, getting from under the shadow of Du Pont's influence.

Mr. Hooper and Mr. Gooch have possessed themselves of the belief — not a new one in that locality — that the Representatives of the Boston and Charlestown districts are entitled to the custody, management, and keeping of the Boston Navy Yard, and that all rules, regulations, and management of that yard must be made to conform to certain party views of theirs and their party friends.

July 17, *Friday.* At the Cabinet council Seward expressed great apprehension of a break-up of the British Ministry. I see in the papers an intimation that should Roebuck's motion for a recognition of the Confederacy prevail, Earl Russell would resign. I have no fears that the motion will prevail. The English, though mischievously inclined, are not demented. I wish the policy of our Secretary of State, who assumes to be wise, was as discreet as theirs. He handed me consular dispatches from Mr. Dudley at Liverpool and is exceedingly alarmed; fears England will let all the ironclads and rovers go out, and that the sea robbers will plunder and destroy our commerce. Mr. Dudley is an excellent consul, vigilant, but somewhat, and excusably, nervous, and he naturally presents the facts which he gets in a form that will not do injustice to the activity and zeal of the consul. Seward gives, and always has given, the fullest credit to the wildest rumors.

Some remarks on the great error of General Meade in permitting Lee and the Rebel army with all their plunder to escape led the President to say he would not yet give up that officer. "He has committed," said the President, "a terrible mistake, but we will try him farther." No one expressed his approval, but Seward said, "Excepting the escape of Lee, Meade has shown ability." It was evident that the retention of Meade had been decided.

In a conversation with General Wadsworth, who called on me, I learned that at the council of the general officers, Meade was disposed to make an attack, and was supported by Wadsworth, Howard, and Pleasonton, but Sedgwick,

Sykes, and the older regular officers dissented. Meade, rightly disposed but timid and irresolute, hesitated and delayed until too late. Want of decision and self-reliance in an emergency has cost him and the country dear, for had he fallen upon Lee it could hardly have been otherwise than the capture of most of the Rebel army.

The surrender of Port Hudson is undoubtedly a fact. It could not hold out after the fall of Vicksburg. We have information also that Sherman has caught up with and beaten Johnston.

July 18, *Saturday.* Have a letter from Governor Andrew, who in a matter misrepresented me; claims to have been led into error by the "Gloucester men," and is willing to drop the subject.[1] I shall not object, for the Governor is patriotic and zealous as well as somewhat fussy and fanatical.

General Marston and others, a delegation from New Hampshire with a letter from the Governor, wanted additional defenses for Portsmouth. Letters from numerous places on the New England coast are received to the same effect. Each of them wants a monitor, or cruiser, or both. Few of them seem to be aware that the shore defenses are claimed by and belong to the War, rather than the Navy, Department, nor do they seem to be aware of any necessity for municipal and popular effort for their own protection.

Two delegations are here from Connecticut in relation to military organizations for home work and to preserve the peace. I went to the War Department in their behalf, and one was successful, perhaps both.

[1] This refers to the statement, in a letter of July 1, from Governor Andrew to Secretary Welles, that the Navy Department had sent no vessels to the defense of the Massachusetts coast till after the Confederate cruiser Tacony "had rioted along the Vineyard Sound for four days." The Secretary, under date of July 11, showed the incorrectness of this allegation, and Governor Andrew, in his letter of the 16th, withdrew it and explained that it was made "upon the authority of municipal officers and citizens of Gloucester."

There is some talk, and with a few, a conviction, that we are to have a speedy termination of the war. Blair is confident the Rebellion is about closed. I am not so sanguine. As long as there is ability to resist, we may expect it from Davis and the more desperate leaders, and when they quit, as they will if not captured, the seeds of discontent and controversy which they have sown will remain, and the social and political system of the insurrectionary States is so deranged that small bodies may be expected to carry on for a time, perhaps for years, a bushwhacking warfare. It will likely be a long period before peace and contentment will be fully restored. Davis, who strove to be, and is, the successor of Calhoun, without his ability, but with worse intentions, is ambitious and has deliberately plunged into this war as the leader, and, to win power and fame, has jeopardized all else. The noisy, gasconading politicians of the South who figured in Congress for years and had influence have, in their new Confederacy, sunk into insignificance. The Senators and Representatives who formerly loomed up in Congressional debate in Washington, and saw their harangues spread before the country by a thousand presses, have all been dwarfed, wilted, and shriveled. The "Confederate Government," having the element of despotism, compels its Congress to sit with closed doors. Davis is the great "I am."

In the late military operations of the Rebels he has differed with Lee, and failed to heartily sustain that officer. It was Lee's plan to uncover Washington by inducing Hooker to follow him into Pennsylvania. Hooker fell into the trap and withdrew everything from here, which is surprising, for Halleck's only study has been to take care of himself and not fall into Rebel hands. But he felt himself safe if Hooker and the army were between him and Lee.

From the interrupted dispatches and other sources, it is ascertained that Lee's plan was the concentration of a force of 40,000 men at Culpeper to rush upon Washington when our army and the whole Potomac force was far away in the

Valley of the Cumberland. But Davis, whose home is in Mississippi and whose interest is there, did not choose to bring Beauregard East. The consequence has been the frustration of Lee's plans, which have perished without fruition. He might have been disappointed, had he been fairly seconded. Davis has undoubtedly committed a mistake. It hastens the end. Strange that such a man as Davis, though possessing ability, should mislead and delude millions, some of whom have greater intellectual capacity than himself. They were, however, and had been, in a course of sectional and pernicious training under Calhoun and his associates, who for thirty years devoted their time and talents to the inculcation first of hate, and then of sectional division, or a reconstruction of the federal government on a different basis. Nullification was an outgrowth. When Calhoun closed his earthly career several men of far less ability sought to wear his mantle. I have always entertained doubts whether Calhoun intended a dismemberment of the Union. He aimed to procure special privileges for the South, — something that should secure perpetuity to the social and industrial system of that section, which he believed, not without reason, was endangered by the increasing intelligence and advancing spirit of the age. Many of the lesser lights — shallow political writers and small speech-makers — talked flippantly of disunion, which they supposed would enrich the South and impoverish the North. "Cotton is king," they said and believed, and with it they would dictate terms not only to the country but the world. The arrogance begotten of this folly led to the great Rebellion.

Davis is really a despot, exercising arbitrary power, and the people of the South are abject subjects, demoralized, subdued, but frenzied and enraged, with little individual independence left, — an impoverished community, hurrying to swift destruction. "King Cotton" furnishes them no relief. Men are not permitted in that region of chivalry to express their views if they tend to national unity.

Hatred of the Union, of the government, and of the country is the basis of the Confederate despotism. Hate, sectional hate, is really the fundamental teaching of Calhoun and his disciples. How is it to be overcome and when can it be eradicated? It has been the growth of a generation, and abuse of the doctrine of States' rights, — a doctrine sound and wholesome in our federal system when rightly exercised. But when South Carolina in 1832 assumed the sovereign right of nullifying the laws of the government of which she was a member, — defeating by State action the federal authority and setting it at defiance, — claiming to be a part of the Union but independent of it while yet a part, her position becomes absolutely contradictory and untenable. Compelled to abandon the power and absolute right of a State to overthrow the government which she helped to create, or destroy federal jurisdiction, the nullifiers, still discontented, uneasy, and ambitious, resorted to another expedient, that of withdrawing from the Union, and, by combining with other States, establishing power to resist the government and country. Sectionalism or a combination of States was substituted for the old nullification doctrine of States' rights. If they could not remain in the Union and nullify its laws, they could secede and disregard laws and government. Can it be extinguished in a day? I fear not. It will require time.

It is sad and humiliating to see men of talents, capacity, and of reputed energy and independence, cower and shrink and humble themselves before the imperious master who dominates over the Confederacy. Political association and the tyranny of opinion and of party first led them astray, and despotism holds them in the wrong as with a vise. The whole political, social, and industrial fabric of the South is crumbling to ruins. They see and feel the evil, but dare not attempt to resist it. There is little love or respect for Davis among such intelligent Southern men as I have seen.

Had Meade done his duty, we should have witnessed

a speedy change throughout the South. It is a misfortune that the command of the army had not been in stronger hands and with a man of broader views, and that he had not a more competent superior than Halleck. The late infirm action will cause a postponement of the end. Lee has been allowed to retreat — to retire — unmolested, with his army and guns, and the immense plunder which the Rebels have pillaged. The generals have succeeded in prolonging the war. Othello's occupation is not yet gone.

July 20, *Monday.* Morgan's invasion of Ohio and Indiana is likely to terminate more creditably to the Union cause than Lee's excursion into Pennsylvania. It looks as if the fellow and his force would be captured.

July 21, *Tuesday.* A dispatch from General Grant makes mention of large captures of cattle coming east from Texas, and of munitions going south to Kirby Smith. General Sherman is following up Joe Johnston.

A dispatch from Admiral Porter says that he, in concert with General Grant, sent an expedition up the Yazoo and that it was a complete success. Grant in his dispatch makes no mention of, or allusion to, the Navy in this expedition, nor of any consultation with Admiral Porter, although without the naval force and naval coöperation nothing could have been accomplished.

LeRoy telegraphs that he, with his gunboats, followed Morgan, or kept on his flank five hundred miles up the Ohio River, encountered him when attempting to cross the river near Bluffington, and drove him back.

The aspect of things is more favorable and it is amusing to read the English papers and speeches anticipating, hoping, predicting disaster to the Union cause. It will be more amusing to read the comments on the reception of intelligence by the steamer which left soon after the 4th inst.

July 22, *Wednesday.* A delegation from Connecticut, appointed by the Legislature, called on me and consumed some time in relation to the coast defenses of the State and the waters of Long Island Sound. There is quite a panic along the whole New England coast. It is impossible to furnish all the vessels desired, and there is consequently the disagreeable result of refusal. I have very little apprehension of danger from any rover or predatory excursion in that quarter, yet it is possible, as it is possible some Rebel may set my house on fire. Should a rover make a dash in the Sound, do damage, and escape, great and heavy would be the maledictions on me after these formal applications. I am many times a day reminded and told of my responsibility.

Called last evening to see young Dahlgren. Was shocked to hear the gallant young fellow had lost his leg. Shall be glad if he does not lose his life, which I much fear.

Mr. Gooch and Mr. Hooper[1] continue to be very troublesome in regard to the Charlestown Navy Yard, which they are disposed to take into their hands, so far at least as to make it subservient to their election and party aspirations.

July 23, *Thursday.* I had a call on Monday morning from Senator Morgan and Sam J. Tilden of New York in relation to the draft. General Cochrane was present during the interview and took part in it. The gentlemen seemed to believe a draft cannot be enforced in New York.

Am feeling anxious respecting movements in Charleston Harbor. It is assumed on all hands by the people and the press that we shall be successful. I am less sanguine, though not without hopes. Fort Wagner should have been captured in the first assault. The Rebels were weaker then than they will be again, and we should have been as strong at the first attack as we can expect to be. Gillmore may

[1] Daniel W. Gooch and Samuel Hooper, Republican Congressmen from Massachusetts.

have been a little premature, and had not the necessary force for the work.

Whiting, Solicitor of the War Department, has gone to Europe. Is sent out by Seward, I suppose, for there is much sounding of gongs over the mission instituted by the State Department to help Mr. Adams and our consuls in the matter of fitting, or of preventing the fitting out of naval vessels from England. This Solicitor Whiting has for several months been an important personage here. I have been assured from high authority he is a remarkable man. The Secretary of War uses him, and I am inclined to believe he uses the Secretary of War. This fraternity has made the little man much conceited. Mr. Seward, Mr. Chase, and even the President have each of them spoken to me of him, as capable, patriotic, and a volunteer in the civil service to help the Government and particularly the War Department.

I have found him affable, anxious to be useful, with some smartness; vain, egotistical, and friendly; voluble, ready, sharp, not always profound, nor wise, nor correct; cunning, assuming, presuming, and not very fastidious; such a man as Stanton would select and Seward use. Chase, finding him high in the good graces of the President and the Secretary of War, has taken frequent occasion to speak highly of Solicitor Whiting. My admiration is not as exalted as it should be, if he is all that those who ought to know represent him.

July 24, *Friday*. This being Cabinet day, Mr. Seward spent an hour with the President, and when the rest came in, he immediately withdrew. Some inquiry was made in regard to army movements and Meade in particular, but no definite information was communicated. Meade is watching the enemy as fast as he can since he let them slip and get away from him.

Some cheering news from Foster, who has cut the great Southern Railroad and burnt the bridge over Tar River.

A force from Kelley has also seized and destroyed the Southwestern Railroad at Wytheville. While something efficient is being done by Union generals with small commands, the old complaint of inactivity and imbecility is again heard against the great Army of the Potomac. Meade is — I say it in all kindness — unequal to his position, cannot grasp and direct so large a command, would do better with a smaller force and more limited field, or as second under a stronger and more able general. If he hesitates like McClellan, it is for a different reason. Since the Battle of Gettysburg he has done nothing but follow Lee at a respectful distance.

July 25, *Saturday*. Colonels Ross and Morris, commanding two of our Connecticut regiments, came to see me. Each is of opinion that few men will be obtained in that State under the draft. I fear the subject has not been managed with much skill, and that it has been done without much consultation or advice. Possibly one or two members of the Cabinet have run to the War Department and volunteered their views. I have not.

July 26, *Sunday*. Dispatches from Admiral Dahlgren under date of the 21st were received in the second mail. He says Gillmore had but 8000 men when he commenced operations, that of these he has lost by casualties — killed, wounded, and prisoners — about 1200, and a like number are useless by illness, the result of overexertion, etc., so that he has actually less than 6000 effective men. The War Department does not propose to strengthen him. Dahlgren three or four times has said the force was inadequate, and expressed a hope for reinforcements. I sent Assistant Fox with these dispatches to Halleck, who rebuffed him, — said General Gillmore had called for no more troops, and if we would take care of the Navy, he would take care of the Army.

I went this noon (Sunday) to the President with Dahl-

gren's dispatches; told him the force under Gillmore was insufficient for the work assigned him; that it ought not now to fail; that it ought not to have been begun unless it was understood his force was to have been increased; that such was his expectation, and I wished to know if it could not be done. It would be unwise to wait until Gillmore was crushed and repelled, and to then try and regain lost ground, which seemed to be the policy of General Halleck; instead of remaining inactive till Gillmore, exhausted, cried for help, his wants should be anticipated.

The President agreed with me fully, but said he knew not where the troops could come from, unless from the Army of the Potomac, but if they were going to fight they would want all their men. I asked if he really believed Meade was going to have a battle. He looked at me earnestly for a moment and said: "Well, to be candid, I have no faith that Meade will attack Lee; nothing looks like it to me. I believe he can never have another as good opportunity as that which he trifled away. Everything since has dragged with him. No, I don't believe he is going to fight."

"Why, then," I asked, "not send a few regiments to Charleston? Gillmore ought to be reinforced with ten thousand men. We intend to send additional seamen and marines." "Well," said the President, "I will see Halleck. I think we should strain a point. May I say to him that you are going to strengthen Dahlgren?" "Yes," I replied. "But it would be better that you should say you ordered it, and that you also ordered the necessary army increase. Let us all do our best."

Our interview was in the library, and was earnest and cordial. If, following the dictates of his own good judgment, instead of deferring to Halleck, who lacks power, sagacity, ability, comprehension, and foresight to devise, propose, plan, and direct great operations, and who is reported to be engaged on some literary work at this important period, the President were to order and direct

measures, the army would be inspired and the country benefited. A delicacy on the part of Gillmore to ask for aid is made the excuse of the inert General-in-Chief for not sending the troops which are wanted, and when he learns from a reliable source of the weak condition of the command, he will not strengthen it, or move, till calamity overtakes it, or he is himself ordered to do his duty. Halleck originates nothing, anticipates nothing, to assist others; takes no responsibility, plans nothing, suggests nothing, is good for nothing. His being at Headquarters is a national misfortune.

July 27, *Monday.* Had a strange letter from Senator John P. Hale, protesting against the appointment of Commodore Van Brunt to the command of the Portsmouth Navy Yard, because he and V. B. are not on friendly terms. He wishes me to become a party to a personal controversy and to do injustice to an officer for the reason that he and that officer are not in cordial relations. The pretensions and arrogance of Senators become amazing, and this man, or Senator, would carry his private personal disagreement into public official actions. Such are his ideas of propriety and Senatorial privilege and power that he would not only prostitute public duty to gratify his private resentment, but he would have the Department debased into an instrument to minister to his enmities.

I have never thought of appointing Van Brunt to that yard, but had I intended it, this protest could in no wise prevent or influence me. With more propriety, I could request the Senate not to make Hale Chairman of the Naval Committee, for in the entire period of my administration of the Navy Department, I have never received aid, encouragement, or assistance of any kind whatever from the Chairman of the Naval Committee of the Senate, but constant, pointed opposition, embarrassment, and petty annoyance, of which this hostility to Van Brunt is a specimen. But I have not, and shall not, ask the Senate

to remove this *nuisance* out of their way and out of my way. They have witnessed his conduct and know his worthlessness in a business point of view; they know what is due to the country and to themselves, as well as to the Navy Department.

The Mexican Republic has been extinguished and an empire has risen on its ruins. But for this wicked rebellion in our country this calamity would not have occurred. Torn by factions, down-trodden by a scheming and designing priesthood, ignorant and vicious, the Mexicans are incapable of good government, and unable to enjoy rational freedom. But I don't expect an improvement of their condition under the sway of a ruler imposed upon them by Louis Napoleon.

The last arrivals bring us some inklings of the reception of the news that has begun to get across the Atlantic of our military operations. John Bull is unwilling to relinquish the hope of our national dismemberment. There is, on the part of the aristocracy of Great Britain, malignant and disgraceful hatred of our government and people. In every way that they could, and dare, they have sneakingly aided the Rebels. The tone of their journals shows a reluctance to believe that we have overcome the Rebels, or that we are secure in preserving the Union. The Battle of Gettysburg they will not admit to have been disastrous to Lee, and they represent it as of little importance compared with Vicksburg and Port Hudson, which they do not believe can be taken. Palmerston and Louis Napoleon are as much our enemies as Jeff Davis.

July 28, *Tuesday.* The Secretary of War promises that he will reinforce General Gillmore with 5000 men. I thought it should be 10,000 if we intended thorough work, but am glad of even this assurance. General Halleck excuses his non-action by saying Gillmore had not applied for more men. Vigilance is not one of Halleck's qualifications.

July 29, *Wednesday.* A very busy day, though still far from well. Had a call from Colonel Forney. Some remarks which I made in relation to Rebel movements appeared to strike him with interest, and, as he left me, he said he should go at once and enter them for an editorial. This evening he sends me a note requesting me to read my article in his paper, the *Chronicle*, to-morrow morning.

July 30, *Thursday.* John P. Hale is here in behalf of certain contractors who have been guilty of bad faith. The Chairman of the Naval Committee is not on this service without pay. Commander Wise, who is Acting Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, wants Aulick appointed Assistant. This will aid him to the position of actual Chief, should Dahlgren not return, and increase Aulick's pay. There will be no change of duties.

July 31, *Friday.* I met at the President's, and was introduced by him to, Colonel Rawlins of General Grant's staff. He arrived yesterday with the official report of the taking of Vicksburg and capture of Pemberton's army. Was much pleased with him, his frank, intelligent, and interesting description of men and account of army operations. His interview with the President and Cabinet was of nearly two hours' duration, and all, I think, were entertained by him. His honest, unpretending, and unassuming manners pleased me; the absence of pretension, and I may say the unpolished and unrefined deportment, of this earnest and sincere man, patriot, and soldier pleased me more than that of almost any officer whom I have met. He was never at West Point and has had few educational advantages, yet he is a soldier, and has a mind which has served his general and his country well. He is a sincere and earnest friend of Grant, who has evidently sent him here for a purpose.

It was the intention of the President last fall that General McClernand, an old neighbor and friend of his, should have been associated with Admiral Porter in active opera-

tions before Vicksburg. It was the expressed and earnest wish of Porter to have a citizen general, and he made it a special point to be relieved from associations with a West-Pointer; all West-Pointers, he said, were egotistical and assuming and never willing to consider and treat naval officers as equals. The President thought the opportunity a good one to bring forward his friend McClernand, in whom he has confidence and who is a volunteer officer of ability, and possesses, moreover, a good deal of political influence in Illinois. Stanton and Halleck entered into his views, for Grant was not a special favorite with either. He had also, like Hooker, the reputation of indulging too freely in whiskey to be always safe and reliable.

Rawlins now comes from Vicksburg with statements in regard to McClernand which show him an impracticable and unfit man, — that he has not been subordinate and intelligent, but has been an embarrassment, and, instead of directing or assisting in, has been really an obstruction to, army movements and operations. In Rawlins's statements there is undoubtedly prejudice, but with such appearance of candor, and earnest and intelligent conviction, that there can be hardly a doubt McClernand is in fault, and Rawlins has been sent here by Grant in order to enlist the President rather than bring dispatches. In this, I think, he has succeeded, though the President feels kindly towards McClernand. Grant evidently hates him, and Rawlins is imbued with the feelings of his chief.

Seward wished me to meet him and the President at the War Department to consider the subject of the immediate occupation of some portion of Texas. My letters of the 9th and 23d ult. and conversation since have awakened attention to the necessity of some decisive action. [These letters follow.]

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
9 June, 1863.

SIR,

In acknowledging the receipt of the copy of despatch No. 51, from the Vice Consul at Havana, transmitted to me with your

letter of the 6th inst., I have the honor to state that the suggestions therein contained are worthy of consideration. It is, in every point of view, important that early and effective measures should be taken, not only to interdict the traffic carried on with the rebels on the Rio Grande, but to afford protection to loyal citizens in Western Texas.

I shall send a copy of the Vice Consul's despatch to Rear Admiral Farragut and direct his attention to the subject; but without a military occupation of Brownsville, I apprehend the naval force alone will be insufficient to either blockade, or protect our interests in that quarter. The navigation of the Rio Grande must be left unobstructed and until the left bank of the river shall be occupied by our troops, a large portion of the cargoes that are formally cleared for Matamoras have a contingent destination for Texas. Most of the shipments to Matamoras will, until such occupancy, pass into the rebel region.

The subject is one demanding the attention of the Government at the earliest available moment.

I am, respectfully,
Your Obd't Serv't
GIDEON WELLES,
Secty. of Navy.

HON. WM. H. SEWARD,
Secty. of State.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
23 June, 1863.

SIR,

I have the honor to return herewith the consular despatches which accompanied your letter of the 16th ultimo.

The suggestion of our commercial agent at Belize, in regard to the traffic carried on by the insurgents via Matamoras, deserves especial consideration. It appears to me some measures should be taken to interdict this trade; for as now permitted, the great purposes and ends of the Blockade are measurably defeated. That the clearances which these vessels have ostensibly for Matamoras, as Mr. Leas remarks, were subterfuges — decoys to cover up the true designs and purposes of the parties, which are to introduce, through French and other agencies, contraband of war into the hands of our enemies — is notorious.

It is desirable that the fraudulent practices mentioned by Mr.

Leas should be discontinued, and I trust the attention of the British and Mexican Governments is called to them.

It seems to me some measures should be taken in concert with Mexico, by which illicit traffic with the rebels, by the way of the Rio Grande, may be prevented; or if that Government will not come into an arrangement, then by some legitimate means assert our right to carry into effect an efficient and thorough blockade of that river. The trade of Matamoras has nominally increased an hundred fold since the blockade of the insurgent States was instituted. Admiral Bailey informs the Department that over two hundred vessels are off the mouth of the Rio Grande, when ordinarily there are but six or eight. Our rights as a nation ought not to be sacrificed because a new question has arisen that has not heretofore been adjudicated or settled by diplomatic arrangement. Because the Rio Grande is a neutral highway, it is not to be used to our injury, — yet we know such to be the fact, and it seems to me some effectual steps should be taken to correct the evil. It can be done, I apprehend, in a manner satisfactory to both countries, and a principle be established that will be conformable to international law. I must ask you to excuse me for pressing this subject upon your consideration.

I would also invite your special attention to that portion of the despatch which refers to a mail arrangement, by which Captain Lombard, of the schooner "Robert Anderson," with British papers, was to run a regular mail from Belize to Matamoras for the "Confederate Government." Would it not be well to inform the Secretary of War of the facts in relation to "Vallez," at New Orleans, that General Banks may be apprized of the schemes and purposes of that gentleman?

I am, respectfully,
Your Obd't Serv't
GIDEON WELLES,
Secty. of Navy.

HON. WM. H. SEWARD,
Secty. of State.

The European combination, or concerted understanding, against us begins to be developed and appreciated. The use of the Rio Grande to evade the blockade, and the establishment of regular lines of steamers to Matamoras

did not disturb some of our people, but certain movements and recent givings-out of the French have alarmed Seward, who says Louis Napoleon is making an effort to get Texas; he therefore urges the immediate occupation of Galveston and also some other point. At the Cabinet-meeting to-day, he took Stanton aside and had ten minutes' private conversation with him in a low tone. I was then invited to the conversation and received the above information. I agreed to call as requested at the appointed time, but why this partial, *ex-parte*, half-and-half way of doing these things? Why are not these matters unfolded to the whole Cabinet? Why a special meeting of only three with General Halleck? It is as important that the Secretary of the Treasury, who is granting clearances from New York to Matamoras and thereby sanctions the illicit trade of the English and French, should be advised if any of us. The question which Mr. Seward raises is political, national, and so important to the whole country that the Administration should be fully advised, but for some reason is restricted. The Secretary of State likes to be exclusive; does not want all the Cabinet in consultation, but is particular himself to attend all meetings. It exhibits early bad training and party management, not good administration.

Soon after two I went to the War Department. Seward, Stanton, and Halleck were there, and the Texas subject was being discussed. Halleck, as usual, was heavy, sluggish, not prepared to express an opinion. Did not know whether General Banks would think it best to move on Mobile or Galveston, and if on Galveston whether he would prefer transportation by water or would take an interior route. Had just written Banks. Wanted his reply. I turned to Seward, and, alluding to his morning conversation, I inquired what a demonstration on Mobile had to do with foreign designs in another section. How far Halleck had been let into a knowledge of measures which were withheld from a majority of the Cabinet I was uninformed, though I doubt not Halleck was more fully posted than

myself. Halleck, apprehending the purport of my inquiry, said he mentioned Mobile because there had been some information from Banks concerning operations in that direction before the new question came up. I then asked, if a demonstration was to be made on Texas to protect and guard our western frontier, whether Indianola was not a better point than Galveston. Halleck said he did not know, — had not thought of that. "Where," said he, "is Indianola? What are its advantages?" I replied, in western Texas, where the people had been more loyal than in eastern Texas. It was much nearer the Rio Grande and the Mexican border, consequently was better situated to check advances from the other side of the Rio Grande; the harbor had deeper water than Galveston; the place was but slightly fortified, was nearer Austin, etc., etc. Halleck was totally ignorant on these matters; knew nothing of Indianola,[1] was hardly aware there was such a place; settled down very stolidly; would decide nothing for the present, but must wait to hear from General Banks. The Secretary of State was profoundly deferential to the General-in-Chief, hoped he would hear something from General Banks soon, requested to be immediately informed when word was received; and we withdrew as General Halleck lighted another cigar.

This is a specimen of the management of affairs. A majority of the members of the Cabinet are not permitted to know what is doing. Mr. Seward has something in regard to the schemes and designs of Louis Napoleon; he cannot avoid communicating with the Secretaries of War and the Navy, hence the door is partially open to them. Others are excluded. Great man Halleck is consulted, but is not ready, — has received nothing from others, who he intends shall have the responsibility.

[1] Indianola, Texas, is no longer to be found on the map. It was situated on the western shore of Matagorda Bay on the site now occupied by Port Lavaca, about 125 miles west-southwest of Galveston, but was destroyed by cyclones in 1885 and 1886.

Therefore we must wait a few weeks and not improbably lose a favorable opportunity.

The truth is that Halleck, who has been smuggled into position here by Stanton, aided by Pope and General Scott, is unfit for the place. He has some scholastic attainments but is no general. I can pass that judgment upon him, though I do not profess to be a military man. He has failed to acquit himself to advantage as yet, and the country needs other talents to be successful.

XI

Refutation of Laird's Statement as to an Application from the Navy Department — The President refuses to postpone the Draft — Connection of Howard of Brooklyn with the Laird Matter — The Provisions of the Draft Act discussed in Cabinet — General Halleck and the Almaden Mines — The President adopts Seward's Views as to Instructions to Naval Officers — The President's Letter-Writing — The Ironclads not to leave England — A Confidential Communication from Seward — Assistant-Secretary Fox and the Howard Affair — Conversation with Chase on the Subject of Slavery — General Meade meets the Cabinet — Suggestions from Boston — General F. P. Blair's Account of the Vicksburg Campaign — Injustice of the Draft Act — A Letter from North Carolina — Solicitor Whiting's Schemes for dealing with Slavery — Death of Governor Gurley of Arizona — Conversation with Chase on the Reconstruction of the Union — Secession of the States not to be recognized — Death of Commander George W. Rodgers — The Case of the Mont Blanc — Toombs on Southern Conditions — The Secretary of the Navy placed by Seward in a False Position as to Movements against the English Cruisers — The Subject of Reunion.

August 1, *Saturday*. Made a selection of midshipmen for Naval School. An immense number of applicants and, of course, many disappointments. Some of the young men, and among them probably those who are deserving, feel this first disappointment grievously. It is a pleasure to bestow the favor in many instances, but not sufficient to counterbalance the pain one feels for those who are rejected. Last year there were captious and censorious Members of Congress who abused me for filling the school; the same will probably be the case this year. Were I, however, to omit filling the school, the same persons would blame me for neglect of duty, — not without cause, — and I should not be satisfied with myself for this omission.

August 3, *Monday*. Went on a sail yesterday down the river. The day was exceedingly warm, but with a pleasant company we had an agreeable and comfortable time on the

boat. The jaunt was of benefit to me. I am told by Drs. W. and H., whom I see officially almost daily, and am myself sensible of the fact, that I am too closely confined and too unremittingly employed, but I know not when or how to leave, — hardly for a day. The Sabbath day is not one of rest to me.

August 4, *Tuesday*. Very warm. Little done at Cabinet. Seward undertook to talk wise in relation to Commander Collins and the Mont Blanc, but really betrayed inexcusable ignorance of the subject of prize and prize courts, and admiralty law, the responsibilities of an officer, etc.

August 7, *Friday*. Went on board of steamer Baltimore Wednesday evening in company with a few friends, for a short excursion. My object was to improve the time set apart for Thanksgiving in a trip to the capes of Chesapeake, and there imbibe for a few hours the salt sea air in the hope I should thereby gather strength. Postmaster-General Blair, Governor Dennison of Ohio, Mr. Fox, Mr. Faxon, Dr. Horwitz, and three or four others made up the party. We returned this A.M. at 8, all improved and invigorated.

The papers contain a letter of mine to Senator Sumner, written last April, denying the reckless falsehood of John Laird, made on the floor of Parliament, to the effect that I had sent an agent to him or his firm to build a ship or ships. There is not one word of truth in his statement. Had I done so, is there any one so simple as to believe the Lairds would refuse to build? — those virtuous abolitionists who, as a matter of principle, would not use the product of slave labor, but who for mercenary considerations snatched at the opportunity to build ships for the slave oligarchy? But I employed no agent to build, or to procure to be built, naval vessels abroad of any description. My policy from the beginning was not to build or have built naval vessels in foreign countries. Our shipbuilders com-

peted strongly for all our work. The statement of Laird is mendacious, a deliberate falsehood, knowingly such, and uttered to prejudice not only the cause of our country but of liberty and human rights.

A friend of Laird's, an abolitionist of Brooklyn, New York, tried to secure a contract for Laird, but did not succeed. When Laird found he could secure no work from us, he went over to the Rebels and worked for them. After making his false statement in Parliament, fearing he should be exposed, he wrote to Howard, his abolition friend in Brooklyn, begging to be sustained. Howard being absent in California, his son sent the letter to Fox, through whom they tried to intrigue in the interest of Laird.

The President read to us a letter received from Horatio Seymour, Governor of New York, on the subject of the draft, which he asks may be postponed. The letter is a party, political document, filled with perverted statements, and apologizing for, and diverting attention from, his mob.

The President also read his reply, which is manly, vigorous, and decisive. He did not permit himself to be drawn away on frivolous and remote issues, which was obviously the intent of Seymour.

August 10, *Monday*. Have not been well for the last two days, and am still indisposed, but cannot omit duties. The weather is oppressively warm. Friends think I ought to take a few days repose. Dr. Horwitz advises it most earnestly. Rest and a change of atmosphere might be of service, but I think quiet here better than excitement and uncertainty elsewhere. I had arranged in my own mind to spend a couple of weeks in entire seclusion at Woodcliff, but M., after the exhibition of mob hostility in New York, is apprehensive that my presence there will jeopardize him and his property. I must therefore seek another place if I go from Washington, which I now think is hardly probable.

The papers are discussing very liberally the Parliamentary statement of Laird and my denial. To sustain himself, Laird publishes an anonymous correspondence with some one who professes to be intimate with the "*Minister* of the Navy." His correspondence, if genuine, I have reason to believe was with Howard of Brooklyn, whom I do not know and who is untruthful.

Charles B. Sedgwick, Chairman of the Naval Committee of the House, writes Chief Clerk Faxon, that Howard called on him in the summer of 1861 in behalf of the Lairds, with plans and specifications and estimates for vessels; that he, Sedgwick, referred H. to me; that I refused to negotiate. In other words, I doubtless refused to entertain any proposition. Of Howard I know very little, having never, that I am aware, seen him. I may have done so as the agent or friend of Laird in 1861, and if so declined any offer. From his letters to Laird I judge he tried to palm himself on Laird for all he was worth, and as possessing an intimacy which I neither recognize nor admit. He seems to have gone to the Naval Committee instead of the Navy Department or "*Minister* of the Navy" with his plans. Was confessedly an agent of Laird, who is an unmitigated liar and hypocrite. Professing to be an antislavery man from principle and an earnest friend of the Union, he and his firm have for money been engaged in the service of the slaveholders to break up our Union.

August 11, *Tuesday*. Admiral Farragut has arrived in New York and telegraphs me he will report in person when I direct. I congratulated him on his safe return but advised repose with his family and friends during this heated term and to report when it should suit his convenience.

At the Cabinet council the President read another letter from Governor Seymour. I have little respect for him. It may be politic for the President to treat him with respect in consequence of his position.

The draft makes an inroad on the clerical force of the

Departments and on the experts in the public service. The law authorizing the draft is crude, and loose, and wrong in many respects; was never matter of Cabinet consultation, but was got up in the War Department in consultation with the Military Committees, or Wilson, and submitted to no one of the Secretaries, who all, except Stanton, were ignorant of its extraordinary provisions. Some sixty men, many of them experts whose places can hardly be supplied, are drafted as common soldiers from the ordnance works. I have striven to get some action in regard to these men, whose services are indispensable for military purposes, whose labors are of ten times the importance to the government and country in their present employment that they would be were they bearing arms in camp, but as yet without success. I proposed to Chase, who is much annoyed and vexed with the operation of the law in his Department, that we should have the subject considered in the Cabinet to-day; but he declined, said he had no favors to ask of the War Department and nothing to do with it. If the law and that Department in its construction of the law would take the clerks from the Treasury desks, so as to interrupt its business and destroy their capacity, he should be relieved and glad of it. He was bitter toward the War Department, which he has heretofore assiduously courted.

I brought up the subject, but Chase had left. Stanton said he had not yet decided what rule would govern him, but promised he would do as well by the employees of the Navy as of the War Department. He thought, however, he should exact the $200, a substitute, or the military service in all cases, when the conscript was not relieved by physical disabilities. All present acquiesced in this view, Chase being absent, but Attorney-General Bates, who agreed with me.

A singular telegram from General Halleck to his partner in California in relation to the Almaden mines (quicksilver) was brought forward by Mr. Bates and Mr. Usher. In the opinion of these gentlemen it did not exhibit a pure

mind, right intentions, or high integrity on the part of the General-in-Chief. The President, who had been apprised of the facts, thought Halleck had been hasty and indiscreet but he *hoped nothing worse.* Stanton said, with some asperity and emphasis, that the press and distinguished men had abused him on these matters, — had lied about him and knew they were lies. He turned away from Blair as he poured out these denunciations, yet there was no mistaking for whom these invectives were intended.

August 12, *Wednesday.* The President addressed me a letter, directing additional instructions and of a more explicit character to our naval officers in relation to their conduct at neutral ports. In doing this, the President takes occasion to compliment the administration of the Navy in terms most commendatory and gratifying.

The proposed instructions are in language almost identical with certain letters which have passed between Mr. Seward and Lord Lyons, which the former submitted to me and requested me to adopt. My answer was not what the Secretary and Minister had agreed between themselves should be my policy and action. The President has therefore been privately interviewed and persuaded to write me, — an unusual course with him and which he was evidently reluctant to do. He earnestly desires to keep on terms of peace with England and, as he says to me in his letter, to sustain the present Ministry, which the Secretary of State assures him is a difficult matter, requiring all his dexterity and ability, — hence constant derogatory concessions.

In all of this Mr. Seward's subservient policy, or want of a policy, is perceptible. He has no convictions, no fixed principles, no rule of action, but is governed and moved by impulse, fancied expediency, and temporary circumstances. We injure neither ourselves nor Great Britain by an honest and firm maintenance of our rights, but Mr. Seward is in constant trepidation lest the Navy Department or some naval officer shall embroil us in a war, or make trouble

with England. Lord Lyons is cool and sagacious, and is well aware of our *premier's* infirmities, who in his fears yields everything almost before it is asked. Hence the remark of Historicus (Sir Vernon Harcourt) that "the fear of England is not that the Americans will yield too little but that we shall take too much." That able writer has the sagacity to see, and the frankness to say, that the time will come when England will have a war on her hands and Americans will be neutrals.

The President has a brief reply to Governor Seymour's rejoinder, which is very well. Stanton said to me he wished the President would stop letter-writing, for which he has a liking and particularly when he feels he has facts and right [on his side]. I might not disagree with Stanton as regards some correspondence, but I think the President has been more successful with Seymour than some others. His own letters and writings are generally unpretending and abound in good sense.

Seward informs me in confidence that he has, through Mr. Adams, made an energetic protest to Great Britain against permitting the ironclads to leave England, distinctly informing the Ministry that it would be considered by us as a declaration of war. The result is, he says, the ironclads will not leave England. I have uniformly insisted that such would be the case if we took decided ground and the Ministry were satisfied we were in earnest.

Spain, Seward says, had been seduced with schemes to help the Rebels, and was to have taken an active part in intervention, or acknowledging the independence of the Confederates, but on learning the course of Roebuck, and after the discussion in the British Parliament, Spain had hastened to say she should not interfere in behalf of the Rebels. But Tassara, the Spanish Minister, under positive instructions, had on the 9th inst. given our government formal notice that after sixty days Spain would insist that her jurisdiction over Cuba extended six miles instead of the marine league from low-water mark. To this Seward said

he replied we should not assent; that we could not submit to a menace, especially at such a time as this; that the subject of marine jurisdiction is a question of international law in which all maritime nations have an interest, and it was not for Spain or any one or two countries to set it aside.

He says Lord Lyons has been to him with a complaint that a British vessel having Rebel property on board had been seized in violation of the admitted principle that free ships made free goods. But he advised Lord L. to get all the facts and submit them, etc.

From some cause Seward sought this interview and was unusually communicative. Whether the President's letter, which originated with him, as he must be aware I fully understand, had an influence in opening his mouth and heart I know not. His confidential communication to me should have been said in full Cabinet. In the course of our conversation, Seward said "some of the facts had leaked out through the President, who was apt to be communicative."

The condition of the country and the future of the Rebel States and of slavery are rising questions on which there are floating opinions. No clear, distinct, and well-defined line of policy has as yet been indicated by the Administration. I have no doubt there is, and will be, diversity of views in the Cabinet whenever the subject is brought up. A letter from Whiting, Solicitor of the War Department, has been recently published, quite characteristic of the man. Not unlikely Stanton may have suggested, or assented to, this document, by which some are already swearing their political faith. Mr. Whiting is in high favor at the War and State Departments, and on one occasion the President endorsed him to me. I think little of him. He is ready with expedients but not profound in his opinions; is a plausible advocate rather than a correct thinker, more of a patent lawyer than a statesman. His elaborate letter does not in my estimation add one inch to his stature.

August 13, *Thursday.* Laird's friend Howard telegraphs Fox that he has a letter of F.'s which conflicts with my letter to Sumner, and, while he does not want to go counter to the country, does not wish to be sacrificed. Faxon, who has charge of Fox's letters and correspondence, is disturbed by this; says that Fox has been forward, and too ready with his letters substituted for those of the Secretary or chiefs of bureaus; has an idea that Fox took upon himself to correspond with Howard and perhaps L. when I turned them off.

There may be something in these surmises, not that Fox intended to go contrary to my decision, but he was perhaps anxious to do something to give himself notoriety. At times he is officious. Most men like to be, or to appear to be, men of authority, he as well as others. I have observed that when he knows my views and desires he likes to communicate them to the parties interested as his own. Orders which I frequently send to chiefs of bureaus and others through him, he often reduces to writing, signing his own name to the order. These are little weaknesses which others as well as Faxon detect, and I permit to give me no annoyance; but Faxon, who is very correct, is disturbed by them and thinks there is an ulterior purpose in this. Admiral Smith, Lenthall, and Dahlgren have been vexed by them, and not infrequently, perhaps always, come to me with these officious, formal orders signed by the Assistant Secretary, as if issued by himself. Faxon thinks Fox may have taken upon himself to correspond with Howard, and committed himself and the Department. There can, I think, have been no committal, for Fox is shrewd, and has known my policy and course from the beginning. He doubtless wrote Howard, from what the latter says, but without any authority, and he saw my letter to Sumner without a suggestion that he had given other encouragement.

Chase spent an hour with me on various subjects. Says the Administration is merely departmental, which is true; that he considers himself responsible for no other branch

of the Government than the Treasury, nor for any other than financial measures. His dissent to the War management has become very decisive, though he says he is on particularly friendly terms with Stanton. In many respects, he says, Stanton has done well, though he has unfortunate failings, making intercourse with him at times exceedingly unpleasant; thinks he is earnest and energetic, though wanting in persistency, steadiness. General Halleck Chase considers perfectly useless, a heavy incumbrance, with no heart in the cause, no sympathy for those who have. These are Chase's present views. They are not those he at one time entertained of Halleck, but we all know H. better than we did.

We had some talk on the policy that must be pursued respecting slavery and the relation of the State and Federal Governments thereto. It was, I think, his principal object in the interview, and I was glad it was introduced, for there has been on all sides a general avoidance of the question, though it is one of magnitude and has to be disposed of. His own course, Chase said, was clear and decided. No one of the Rebel States must be permitted to tolerate slavery for an instant. I asked what was to be done with Missouri, where the recent convention had decided in favor of emancipation, but that it should be prospective, — slavery should not be extinguished until 1870. He replied that the people might overrule that, but whether they did or not, Missouri is one of the excepted States, where the Proclamation did not go into effect.

"What, then," said I, "of North Carolina, where there is beginning to be manifested a strong sentiment of returning affection for the Union? Suppose the people of that State should, within the next two or three months, deliberately resolve to disconnect themselves from the Confederacy, and by a popular vote determine that the State should resume her connection with the Union, and in doing so, they should, in view of the large slave population on hand, decide in favor of general but prospective

emancipation, as Missouri has done, and enact there should be an entire abolition of slavery in 1875." He said he would never consent to it, that it conflicted with the Proclamation, that neither in North Carolina, nor in any other State must there be any more slavery. He would not meddle with Maryland and the excepted States, but in the other States the evil was forever extinguished.

I said that no slave who had left his Rebel master could be restored, but that an immediate, universal, unconditional sweep, were the Rebellion crushed, might be injurious to both the slave and his owner, involving industrial and social relations, and promoting difficulties and disturbances; that these embarrassments required deliberate, wise thought and consideration. The Proclamation of Emancipation was justifiable as a military necessity against Rebel enemies, who were making use of these slaves to destroy our national existence; it was in self-defense and for our own preservation, the first law of nature. But were the Rebellion now suppressed, the disposition of the slavery question was, in my view, one of the most delicate and important problems to solve that had ever devolved on those who administrated the government. Were all the Slave States involved in the Rebellion, the case would be different, for then all would fare alike. The only solution which I could perceive was for the Border States to pass emancipation laws. The Federal Government could not interfere with them; it had with the rebellious States, and should morally and rightfully maintain its position. They had made war for slavery, had appealed to arms, and must abide the result. But we must be careful, in our zeal on this subject, not to destroy the great framework of our political governmental system. The States had rights which must be respected, the General Government limitations beyond which it must not pass.

August 14, *Friday*. Had a call from Governor Tod of Ohio, who says he is of Connecticut blood. Governor

Tod is a man of marked character and of more than ordinary ability; has a frank and honest nature that wins confidence and attaches friends.

General Meade called at the Executive Mansion whilst the Cabinet was in session. Most of the members, like myself, had never met him. Blair and he were classmates at West Point, but they have never met since they graduated until to-day. He has a sharp visage and a narrow head. Would do better as second in command than as General-in-Chief. Is doubtless a good officer, but not a great and capable commander. He gave some details of the battle of Gettysburg clearly and fluently. Shows intelligence and activity, and on the whole I was as well or better pleased with him than I expected I should be, for I have had unfavorable impressions, prejudiced, perhaps, since the escape of Lee. This interview confirms previous impressions of the calibre and capacity of the man.

Seward leaves to-day for a rambling excursion with the foreign ministers. Stanton did not come to the meeting whilst I remained. Chase left early, followed by Mr. Bates and myself.

August 15, *Saturday*. Certain persons in Boston have an innate conviction that they can improve the administration of the Navy Department. They are never united among themselves as to how this is to be effected, but all are fond of criticism. They always claim that they expected this thing would fail or that would succeed after the event occurred. I must do them the justice to say, however, that with all their grumbling and faultfinding they have generally given me a fair support. In special cases, where I have been lectured, I have invariably found there was an axe to grind, a purpose to be accomplished. Some one, or more, important personage has had suggestions to make, and for a consideration — never omitting *that* — would consent to help along the work of putting down the Rebellion. These have been the captious ones.

GEORGE G. MEADE

A man by the name of Weld has written a long letter to Governor Andrew. He wants the Governor to aid the Navy Department by writing to the President to form a Naval Board in Massachusetts, with authority to build vessels, fast steamers, such as Massachusetts can build, steamers which will capture or destroy the Alabama, and allow the Massachusetts Board to commission the officers. If there is no appropriation, says good Mr. Weld, take the necessary funds from the Secret Service money. Mr. Weld informs Governor Andrew he is ready to be employed. Governor Andrew indorses over the letter. He also indorses Mr. Weld, who is, he says, one of the most eminent shipbuilders in Massachusetts, and he (Governor A.) is ready to coöperate with Mr. Weld in his patriotic suggestions, etc., etc., etc. This is Boston all over. I have had it from the beginning and periodically. The Welds, etc., from the commencement of hostilities, have prompted and promised almost anything, only requiring the Government to give them power and foot the bills.

I had to-day a very full and interesting account of the campaign and fall of Vicksburg from General F. P. Blair, who has done good service in the field and in politics also. He was a fearless pioneer in the great cause of the Union and breasted the storm in stormy Missouri with a bold front. Of the factions and feuds in St. Louis I pretend to no accurate knowledge, and am no partisan of or for either. Frank is as bold in words as in deeds, fearless in his utterances as in his fights; is uncalculating, — impolitic, it would be said, — rash, without doubt, but sincere and patriotic to the core. I detect in his conversation to-day a determination to free himself from personal and local complications, and if possible to reconcile differences. It is honorable on his part, but I apprehend he has materials to deal with that he cannot master.

G. W. Blunt came to see me. Ridicules Barney and all the government officials in New York but Wakeman. Says old General Wool made himself ridiculous in the mob

difficulties. Calls him a weak old man. If weak, it is from age, for there is no one more patriotic. At eighty he was not the proper man to quell an outbreak. Blunt and others are sore over the removal of General Harvey Brown. He is earnest to have the draft go forward, but says it will be followed by incendiarism. It may be so. Blunt is ardent, impulsive, earnest, and one-sided.

August 17, *Monday.* Wrote Dahlgren, who has serious apprehensions about Laird's ironclad steamers, which troubled Du Pont, that I thought he might feel assured they would not disturb him. Seward says Mr. Adams has made a vigorous protest, and informed the British Government if the Rebel ironclads are permitted to come out it will be *casus belli.* If he has taken that position, which I have always urged, and we persist in it, all will be well.

August 18, *Tuesday.* Blair denounces the practice of dismissing officers without trial as oppressive and wrong. Mentions the case of Lieutenant Kelly, a Pennsylvanian, who, he says, has been unjustly treated. I know not the facts in this particular case, and am aware that a bad President or Secretary might abuse this authority, but a peremptory dismissal without trial is sometimes not only justifiable but necessary. If the authority is abused, let the one who abuses it, whatever his station, be held accountable and, if necessary, impeached.

Stanton wishes me to go with him to Fortress Monroe. Says he has a boat; wants, himself, to go down, etc.

Governor Buckingham was at my house this evening. Has come to Washington to consult in relation to the draft.

In a conversation with General Spinner, the Treasurer, a radical, yet a Democrat of the old school, he condemns the error into which we have fallen of electing too many officers by the people, especially judicial and accounting officers, who should be selected and appointed by an

accountable and responsible executive. Admits his mind has undergone a revolution on this subject.

August 19, *Wednesday*. I called on Stanton to-day on the subject of relieving petty officers of the Navy from the draft, and permitting them to continue in the service where they are engaged, unmolested. These men are now on duty, some on blockade service, some abroad, and the law which subjects these men to draft is monstrous, and the Military Committee who, he says, drew up the law are deserving of censure for their carelessness, — I do not impute to them a design in this. Stanton, who must have seen and been consulted, should have corrected the proceeding. But he seems gratified that such power should have been placed in his hands by Congress, and objects to general relief of naval men, thinks each one, in the employ of other Departments as well as the War, should make application to him for relief. The unthinking and inconsiderate legislators did not intend to subject the sailors who are performing arduous duties afloat to a draft and fine, but they are to be subjected to penalty, although engaged in battle when the draft takes place. Relief can be had if the Secretary of the Navy will make application — be a suppliant for his men — to the Secretary of War for a discharge in each of the thousand cases.

I have a printed letter from R. S. Donnell, an intelligent North Carolinian, formerly Member of Congress, and approved by Governor Vance. It is a review of the conduct and course of the Secessionists, and the object is a restoration of the Union. This subject begins to agitate the public, and has the thoughts of thinking men.

What is to be done with the slaves and slavery? Were slavery out of the way, there would seem to be no serious obstacle to the reëstablishment of the Union. But the cause which was made the pretext of the Civil War will not be readily given up by the masses, who have been duped and misled by their leaders, and who have so large an interest

at stake, without a further struggle. The calculators, the demagogues, are shaping their course to what is inevitable, but they hardly know the shape things may take. Mr. Solicitor Whiting, who is shoved forward, or permitted to go forward, as an oracle, is for abolishing State lines, or rather he asserts they are abolished by the Rebellion. But herein he commits the too common error of making this a war upon the States instead of rebellious individuals. This pitiful nonsense of a scheming lawyer, Solicitor of the War Department, indorsed and got here by Sumner, has not a single element of Republican statesmanship in it. If President Buchanan could not coerce States, Solicitor Whiting of the War Department thinks he can. He and the War Department, though the last do not openly avow it, would annihilate the States, — deprive them of existence, — which would be coercion with a vengeance.

When the government puts down the Rebels, there will be no difficulty as regards the States under our federal system and the fundamental law limiting the power of the general government.

August 20, *Thursday.* Information is received of the death of Governor Gurley. He was a native of Manchester, Connecticut, born within a few miles of my home. He claimed to have imbibed his political principles from me and my writings; was, while in Connecticut and for some time after, an earnest reader of the *Hartford Times,* where many of my writings appeared. Subsequently, when new issues arose, he has often told me of the satisfaction he experienced when he found the *Times* and myself at variance, and that his convictions on the Kansas difficulties and questions in dispute in 1856 and 1860 corresponded with mine. He was here in Congress at the commencement of this administration. Mr. Lincoln thought much of him, and appointed him Governor of Arizona. He was making his preparations to proceed and organize that Territory when death overtook him.

August 21, *Friday*. Made an early call on the President with Joseph P. Allyn, one of the Judges for the Territory of Arizona, on the subject of Governor for that Territory. At the Cabinet-meeting, subsequently, the President concluded to appoint Goodwin Governor and Turner Chief Justice.

Had a free conversation with the President on his proposed instructions to our naval officers. Told him they would in my opinion be injudicious. That we were conceding too much, and I thought unwisely, to the demands of the British Minister. He said he thought it for our interest to strengthen the present ministry, and would therefore strain a point in that direction. I expressed a hope he would not impair his Administration and the national vigor and character by yielding what England had no right to claim, or ask, and what we could not, without humiliation, yield. I finally suggested that Lord Lyons should state what were the instructions of his government, — that he should distinctly present what England claimed and what was the rule in the two cases. We are entitled to know on what principle she acts, — whether her claim is reciprocal, and if she concedes to others what she requires of us. The President chimed in with this suggestion, requested me to suspend further action, and reserve and bring up the matter when Seward and Lord Lyons returned.

This conclusion will disturb Seward, who makes no stand, — yields everything, — and may perhaps clear up the difficulty, or its worst points. I do not shut my eyes to the fact that the letter of the President and the proposed instructions have their origin in the State Department. Lord Lyons has pressed a point, and the easiest way for Mr. Seward to dispose of it is to yield what is asked, without examination or making himself acquainted with the principles involved and the consequences which are to result from his concession. To a mortifying extent Lord Lyons shapes and directs, through the Secretary of State,

an erroneous policy to this government. This is humiliating but true.

August 22, *Saturday.* Mr. Chase called and took me this evening for a two hours' ride. We went past Kalorama north, crossed Rock Creek near the Stone Mill, thence over the hills to Tenallytown, and returned through Georgetown. The principal topic of conversation, and the obvious purpose of this drive was a consultation on the slavery question, and what in common parlance is called the reconstruction of the Union with the incidents. After sounding me without getting definite and satisfactory answers, he frankly avowed his own policy and determination. It is unconditional and immediate emancipation in all the Rebel States, no retrograde from the Proclamation of Emancipation, no recognition of a Rebel State as a part of the Union, or any terms with it except on the extinction, wholly, at once, and forever, of slavery.

I neither adopted nor rejected his emphatic tests, for such he evidently meant them. The questions are of vast magnitude, and have great attending difficulties. The reestablishment of the Union is a practical and important question, and it may come up in a way and form which we cannot now anticipate, and not improbably set aside any hypothetical case which may at this time be presented. I consider slavery, as it heretofore existed, has terminated in all the States, and am not for intruding speculative political theories in advance to embarrass official action.

North Carolinians are just now beginning to discuss the subject of disconnecting their State from the Confederacy. I asked Chase if he believed Congress would refuse to recognize her and the government attempt to exclude her from the Union if she came forward and proposed to resume her place, with slavery, like Maryland and the other Border States. He said much would depend on the President, — all in fact, for were the President to acquiesce in her return it could not be prevented, but on the other

hand, if he planted himself firmly, and with Jacksonian will on the Proclamation, he had no doubt North Carolina would be excluded or refused her original place in the Union, unless she modified her constitution and abolished slavery. He was confident if the Government persisted in emancipation the State would ultimately yield.

"That," said I, "brings up other questions touching the powers and limitations of the Federal Government. Where is the authority for Congress, or a fraction of Congress, to exclude a State, or to prescribe new conditions to one of the original States, on which one of the original commonwealths which founded and established the government shall hereafter compose a part of the Federal Union? Where is the authority for the President or Congress to deprive her of rights reserved and guaranteed to all, — to dictate her local policy, — these restrictive conditions being new, not a part of the Federal compact or known to the Constitution. The States must have equal political rights or the government cannot stand on the basis of 1789."

He replied that those States had severed their connection with the Union without cause, had broken faith and made war on the government. They had forfeited their rights. They no longer retained the position they once had. They were to be subjugated, conquered. In order to be restored to the Union they must be required to put away the cause of disturbance, the source of rebellion, disunion, and strife. The welfare of the nation, the security and perpetuity of the Union demanded this. To admit them now to a full and equal participation with ourselves, without extinguishing slavery, would be with the aid of their sympathizing friends to place the government in the hands of the slaveholders.

That there may be something to be apprehended, were all the Rebels and their old party associates in the Free States to reunite and act in concert, I admit may be true, but this is not a supposable case. The Rebels will not all come back at once, were pardon and general amnesty

extended to them. There is also, bear in mind, deep and wide hostility to the Confederate proceedings through almost the whole South, and the old party associates of Davis and others in the North are broken up and pretty thoroughly alienated. The reëstablishment of the Union and harmony will be a slow process, requiring forbearance and nursing rather than force and coercion. The bitter enmities which have been sown, the hate which has been generated, the blood which has been spilled, the treasure, public and private, which has been wasted, and, last and saddest of all, the lives which have been sacrificed, cannot be forgotten and smoothed over in a day; we can hardly expect it in a generation. By forbearance and forgiveness, by wise and judicious management, the States may be restored to their place and the people to their duty, but let us not begin by harsh assumptions, for even with gentle treatment the work of reconciliation and fraternity will be slow. Let us be magnanimous. Ought we not to act on individuals and through them on the States?

This inquiry seemed to strike him favorably, and I elaborated it somewhat, bringing up old political doctrines and principles which we had cherished in other days. I reminded him that to have a cordial union of the States they must be equal in political rights, and that arbitrary measures did not conduce to good feeling and were not promotive of freedom and good will. As regards individuals who have made war on the government and resisted its laws, they had forfeited their rights and could be punished and even deprived of life, but I knew not how we could punish States as commonwealths except through their people. A State could not be struck out of existence like an individual or corporation.

Besides, it must be remembered, we should be classing the innocent with the guilty, punishing our true friends who had already suffered greatly in the Union cause as severely as the worst Rebels. We could have no *ex post facto* enactments, could not go beyond existing laws to punish

Rebels; we should not do this with our friends, and punish them for wrongs committed by others. We could now exact of Rebels the oath of allegiance before pardon, and could perhaps grant conditional or limited pardons, denying those who had been active in taking up arms the right to vote or hold office for a period. Such as came in on the terms granted would build up loyal communities.

In these general outlines we pretty much agreed, but there is, I apprehend, a radical difference between us as regards the status of the States, and their position in and relation to the general government. I know not that I clearly comprehend the views of Chase, and am not sure that he has fully considered and matured the subject himself. He says he makes it a point to see the President daily and converse on this subject; that he thinks the President is becoming firm and more decided in his opinions, and he wants me to second him. Stanton he says is all right, but is not a man of firm and reliable opinions. Seward and Blair he considers opponents. Bates he says is of no account and has no influence. Usher he classes with himself, though he considers him of no more scope than Bates. Seward he says is unreliable and untruthful. The President he compliments for honesty of intentions, good common sense, more sagacity than he has credit for, but [he thinks he] is greatly wanting in will and decision, in comprehensiveness, in self-reliance, and clear, well-defined purpose.

The reëstablishment of the Union is beset with difficulties. One great embarrassment, the principal one, is the intrusion of partyism. Chase, I see, is warped by this. It is not strange that he should be, for he has aspirations which are likely to be affected by these issues. Others are in like manner influenced. I believe I have no personal ambition to gratify, no expectations. There is no office that I want or would accept in prospect, but my heart is in again beholding us once more United States and a united people.

It appears to me Mr. Chase starts out on an error. The Federal Government has no warrant to impose conditions on any of the States to which all are not subjected, or to prescribe new terms which conflict with those on which our fundamental law is based. In these tempestuous days, when to maintain its existence the Federal Government is compelled to exercise extraordinary powers, statesmen and patriots should take care that it does not transcend its authority and subvert the system. We are testing the strength and inviolability of a written constitution. To impose conditions on the States which are in rebellion is allowable on no other premise than that they actually seceded and left the Union. Now, while it is admitted and we all know that a majority of the people in certain States have rebelled and made war on the central government, none of us recognize or admit the right or principle of secession. People — individuals — have rebelled but the States are sovereignties, not corporations, and they still belong to and are a part of the Union. We can imprison, punish, hang the Rebels by law and constitutional warrant, but where is the authority or power to chastise a State, or to change its political status, deprive it of political rights and sovereignty which other States possess?

To acknowledge that the States have seceded — that the Union is dissolved — would be to concede more than I am prepared for. It is the error into which Mr. Seward plunged at the beginning, when he insisted that a blockade authorized by international law should be established instead of a closure of the ports by national law, and that the Rebels should be recognized as belligerents. The States have not seceded; they cannot secede, nor can they be expelled. Secession is synonymous with disunion. Whenever it takes place, we shall belong to different countries.

Slavery has received its death-blow. The seeds which have been sown by this war will germinate. Were peace restored to-morrow and the States reunited with the

rotten institution in each of them, chattel slavery would expire. What is to be the ultimate effect of the Proclamation, and what will be the exact status of the slaves and the slave-owners, were the States now to resume their position, I am not prepared to say. The courts would adjudicate the questions; there would be legislative action in Congress and in the States also; there would be sense and practical wisdom on the part of intelligent and candid men who are not carried away by prejudice, fanaticism, and wild theories. No slave who has left a Rebel master and come within our lines, or has served under the flag, can ever be forced into involuntary servitude.

The constitutional relations of the States have not been changed by the Rebellion, but the personal condition of every Rebel is affected. The two are not identical. The rights of the States are unimpaired; the rights of those who have participated in the Rebellion may have been forfeited.

This subject should not become mixed with partyism, but yet it can scarcely be avoided. Chase gathers it into the coming Presidential election; feels that the measure of emancipation which was decided without first consulting him has placed the President in advance of him on a path which was his specialty.

August 24, *Monday*. Our advices from Charleston show progress, though slow. The monitors perform well their part. Few casualties have occurred. We hear of a sad one to-day however, in the death of George Rodgers,[1] one of the noblest spirits in the service. It is sad that among so many he, who has perhaps no superior in the best qualities of the man, the sailor, and the officer, should have been the victim. The President called on me in some anxiety this morning, and was relieved when he learned it was not John Rodgers of Atlantic fame. But without dispar-

[1] Commander George Washington Rodgers, who was killed in the attack on Fort Wagner, August 17, 1863.

agement to bold John, no braver, purer spirit than gallant, generous, Christian George could have been sacrificed, and I so said to the President.

Am annoyed and vexed by a letter from Seward in relation to the Mont Blanc. As usual, he has been meddlesome and has inconsiderately, I ought to say heedlessly and unwittingly, done a silly thing. Finding himself in difficulty, he tries to shift his errors on to the Navy Department. He assumes to talk wise without knowledge and to exercise authority without power.

The history of this case exemplifies the management of Mr. Seward. Collins in the Octorara captured the Mont Blanc on her way to Port Royal. The capture took place near Sand Key, a shoal or spit of land over which the English claim jurisdiction. I question their right to assume that these shoals, or Cays, belong to England, and that her jurisdiction extends a marine league from each, most of them being uninhabited, barren spots lying off our coast and used to annoy and injure us. I suggested the propriety of denying, or refusing to recognize, the British claim or title to the uninhabited spots; that the opportunity should not pass unimproved to bring the subject to an issue. But Mr. Seward flinched before Lord Lyons, and alarmed the President by representing that I raised new issues, and without investigating the merits of the case of the Mont Blanc, which was in the courts, he hastened to concede to the English not only jurisdiction, but an apology and damages. It was one of those cases alluded to by Sir Vernon Harcourt, when he admonished his government that "the fear was not that Americans would yield too little, but that England would take too much." Seward yielded everything, — so much as to embarrass Lord Lyons, who anticipated no such humiliation and concession on our part, and therefore asked time. The subject hung along without being disposed of. Seward, being occasionally pushed by Lord Lyons, would come to me. I therefore wrote him on the

31st of July a letter which drew from him a singular communication of the 4th inst., to which I have prepared a reply that will be likely to remain unanswered. [The correspondence follows.]

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
31 July, 1863.

SIR,

On the 13th of May last I had the honor to receive a note from you enclosing the copy of a communication addressed to Lord Lyons, under date of the 7th of May, relative to the seizure of the British schooner Mont Blanc, at Sand Key, Bahama Banks.

In that communication, and in personal interviews, I was informed that it had been admitted by our government that Commander Collins had been guilty of "inconsiderate conduct," and that "compensation ought to be made for the wrong done." I was requested also to designate some person at or near Key West to ascertain the damage to be paid, and in view of these facts, the President directed that the attention of the officers of the Navy shall be distinctly called to certain instructions in a note of yours of the 8th of August last, — alluding I presume to certain suggestions communicated through you to this Department on that day, which eventuated in the instructions to Naval Officers on the 18th of August, 1862. I was moreover directed to make known to Commander Collins that by "seizing the Mont Blanc in British waters and at anchor, he had incurred the disapprobation of the President, and that any repetition will be visited with more severe and effective censure."

In carrying into effect these views, I took occasion to express to you, as I had on other occasions, the opinion that the subjects involved belonged to the courts rather than the Departments, and that with all the facts and circumstances before them, the judicial tribunals would arrive at more correct conclusions than we could with only limited and *ex-parte* information. As requested, however, I designated Acting Rear Admiral Bailey to adjudicate or pass upon the question of damages and informed Commander Collins that he had incurred the displeasure of the President. That officer, feeling that he was reproved for an honest and vigilant discharge of a difficult and responsible duty, and sensitive on a point touching his professional reputation, has procured

and forwarded to the Department the final order of the Court at Key West, in the case of the Mont Blanc, a copy of which I have the honor to transmit herewith. From this final order of Judge Marvin it will be seen that, although by consent of all the parties in interest, the vessel and cargo were restored to the claimants, yet it was decided by the Court "that there was *probable cause* for the capture and detention of the vessel and that each party pay its own costs."

The judgment of the Court, having the parties before it and all the facts in the premises, is an exculpation of Commander Collins, who nevertheless stands reproved and censured for doing that which the Court declares he had probable cause for doing, and would therefore allow no costs, much less damages.

I have felt it my duty to call your attention to this fact, not only to vindicate the opinion which I have so frequently expressed, that all matters of prize should be left to the Courts for adjudication, without prejudice or pre-judgment from the Departments, but in justice to a meritorious officer who has been censured for what he believed a faithful discharge of his duty, and who is acquitted by the legal tribunal for his act in seizing the Mont Blanc.

I apprehend Her Majesty's representative will scarcely insist on damages because, in his correspondence with the government, an incautious admission may have been made, while the court, the proper tribunal, has investigated the case and come to a different conclusion.

I think, moreover, it is an act of simple justice to Commander Collins that the censure upon him should be removed and that his record should remain unstained by the capture of the Mont Blanc.

Very respectfully,
GIDEON WELLES,
Secty. of Navy.

HON. WM. H. SEWARD,
Secty. of State.

Dep't. of State, 4 Aug. 1863.

Hon. G. Welles, Secty. of the Navy.

SIR:—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 31st ulto. relating to the case of the Mont Blanc.

The following seems to be the history of the correspondence on that subject:

On the 9th of Jan. 1863, Aubrey G. Butterfield, Esqr., British Consul at Key West, addressed to the British Consul at New York a note in which he stated that the Mont Blanc of Nassau, New Providence, A. Curry, Master, reached Key West on the 29th of December 1862, under charge of the Octorara; that she had sailed from Green Turtle Key for Port Royal, South Carolina, on the 6th of December and was captured on the 21st when at anchor at Sand Key, Bahama Bank, a mile off the shore. This letter having been transmitted to me by Lord Lyons with a request for investigation, I had the honor to communicate it to you on the 13th of January. On the 17th of January you communicated to me a letter from Commander Collins of the Octorara in which he narrated the capture, and you remarked in the letter which you addressed to me, on that occasion, that it appeared that he captured the Mont Blanc within a marine league of one of the Cays over which the English Government claims jurisdiction, and that the question of jurisdiction at the Keys and Reefs of the Bahamas is one that should not be disposed of without deliberation; for although the amount at issue (in that capture) might be small, yet the principle is important.

Acting Rear Admiral T. Bailey endorsed on the report of the capture made by Commander Collins, the words following: — "Forwarded and attention requested to the fact that one of the captures (meaning that of the Mont Blanc) was made within a marine league of one of the Keys of the Bahamas over which the English claim jurisdiction."

The report of Commander Collins and the indorsement of Acting Rear Admiral Bailey thereon, were communicated to me by you and were afterwards made known to Lord Lyons in reply to his previous call upon this Dep't for explanation.

On the 2d of Feb. T. J. Boynton, Esqr., U. S. District Attorney at Key West, wrote to me to the effect that he had consented to the dismission of the libel against the Mont Blanc and her restitution to the master and claimant, for the reason that the evidence and statements of all parties left no room to doubt that the place where she was seized was within British waters.

On the 9th of Feb. you wrote to me a letter, saying that, in your previous letter, you had called my attention to the ques-

tion of jurisdiction, not for the purpose of indicating that you had adopted any precise and fixed opinion on the particular question, but to call my attention to a matter which seemed likely to be followed by unlooked for and important consequences.

On the 11th of Feb. I had the honor to transmit to you a copy of Mr. Boynton's letter and on the same day communicated a copy of it also to Lord Lyons. On the 1st of May Lord Lyons replied under the instructions of the British Govt. to the effect that the seizure is admitted to have been made in British waters and while the Mont Blanc was at anchor; and Her Majesty's Gov't had accordingly desired him not only to express their expectation of compensation to the owners for the plain wrong done to them, but also to address to the U. S. Gov't a remonstrance against the violation of British territory committed in this case, and to request that orders may be given to the U. S. Navy to abstain from committing the like grave offense against international law and the dignity of the British crown.

To this note, by the President's directions, I replied on the 7th of May, last, that when this case was first brought to the notice of the State Department I had called upon the Secretary of the Navy for information which resulted in a confirmation of His Lordship's representations that the Mont Blanc was seized at anchor within a mile of the shore in waters of which Great Britain claimed jurisdiction; that the vessel having been carried into Key West for adjudication, the attention of the District Attorney there was directed to the case; that on the 2nd of Feb. the Dist. Attorney reported dismission of the case and restitution of the Mont Blanc to Master and Claimant because evidently it had been seized in British waters. That it seemed probable at that time that the master and claimant might have waived any further claim by assenting to the disposition of the case which was thus made without insisting upon a continuance of it for the purpose of obtaining damages. That I had now submitted the claim to the President, and was authorized to say that he admits that in view of all the circumstances of the case such compensation ought to be made and I therefore proposed the mode of settlement which was finally accepted, and which is mentioned in your letter of this date.

You now lay before me a copy of the order which was made in the Prize Court at Key West on the 19th of Jany., before Judge

Marvin. In this order it is declared that the cause of the United States against the schooner Mont Blanc and cargo, having come on to be heard, it is ordered by consent of all the parties interested that the vessel and cargo be restored to the claimant for the benefit of whom it may concern; that there was probable cause for the capture and detention of the vessel and that each party pay his own costs. Having communicated this order to me, you inform me that Commander Collins feels that he was reproved for an honest and vigilant discharge of a difficult and responsible duty, and is sensitive on a point touching his professional reputation. You remark that the judgment of the Court having the parties before it, and all the facts in the premises is an exculpation of Commander Collins, who nevertheless stands reproved and censured for doing that which the Court declares that he had probable cause for doing, and would therefore allow no costs, much less damages.

You remark farther that you have felt it your duty to call my attention to this fact, not only to vindicate the opinion which you have so frequently expressed that all matters of prize should be left to the Court for adjudication without prejudice or prejudgment from the Department, but in justice to a meritorious officer, who has been censured for a faithful discharge of his duty and who is acquitted by the legal tribunal for this act in seizing the Mont Blanc.

You submit an opinion that Her Majesty's Representative will scarcely insist on damages because in his correspondence with the Gov't an incautious admission may have been made, while the Court, the proper tribunal, has investigated the case, and comes to a different conclusion.

Finally, you remark that it is but an act of simple justice to Commander Collins that the censure upon him should be removed, and that his record should remain unstained by the capture of the Mont Blanc.

I have submitted your note to the President together with the voluminous correspondence which it necessarily draws in review. It may be supposed, although it is not stated, that Commander Collins, in making the capture of the Mont Blanc, intended to furnish this Gov't with an occasion to raise a question whether the Key on which that vessel was captured was really within the maritime jurisdiction, although she was known to

assert that claim; and it may be inferred that you intended in your letter of the 17th of Jany. last to intimate to the State Department that the capture presented an opportunity for raising that question.

However this may have been, Rear Adm'l Bailey's indorsement upon Commander Collins' report, and your own remarks upon it, were so expressed as to be understood to concede that the place of capture was within the proper maritime jurisdiction of Great Britain. But whatever reservation might have been practised on that question under other circumstances, it was quite too late for the Executive Government to raise it against the British Government after the Prize Court, with the consent of the Dist. Attorney and the captors, had dismissed the libel and ordered the restitution of the Mont Blanc, upon an agreement of all the parties that the place of capture was unquestionably within British jurisdiction.

So far as relates to damages, the ground was expressly taken in the correspondence with Lord Lyons that the master and owner had waived damages by accepting the decree and the restitution of his vessel. But there still remained a party and rights which the Prize Court did not foreclose. That party was the Gov't of Great Britain, and its claim was one for redress for injuries to its sovereignty and dignity by a violation of her territory. No prize court of our country can try and decide a national claim of this sort. It is a political claim only to be tried and adjudicated by the two Governments concerned. The records of the Gov't admitted the violation. It was confessed in the Court, and made the basis of the restitution of the vessel and her cargo to the owners. It is not perceived that the judgment of the Court now produced affects the disposition of the subject which has been made by the President. The judgment itself is a record that the national sovereignty of Great Britain was violated. And no shadow of a cause justifying the violation has been raised in the whole correspondence. There is nothing but self-defense that could excuse the exercise of aggressive national authority, confessedly on the shores or within the waters of a friendly or neutral nation. It is true the Judge says in that record that there was probable cause for capture, but in the first place, Her Majesty's Gov't was not a party to that cause, and could not be, the alleged violation of its dignity

was not a question upon which the Court had cognizance; and no foreign nation is concluded upon such a claim by the judgment of a prize court in another nation.

The President alone is the judge of what indemnity or satisfaction was due to the British Gov't upon the claim which they presented to him; and having awarded that satisfaction, he is now of opinion that he could not, without giving national offense, withdraw or retract the satisfaction which he has awarded, and which Her Majesty's Gov't have accepted.

He is gratified with the evidence furnished that Commander Collins was actuated by loyal and patriotic motives in making a capture which has been proved to be erroneous. This explanation goes with the record, and it is not deemed unfortunate that the U. S. have shown their respect for the Law of Nations while they can excuse to themselves, but not to foreign nations, an unintentional departure from that law by its most trusted agents.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your Obedient Servant,
WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
26 Aug. 1863.

SIR,

I have had the honor to receive your communication of the 4th Ins't. & 14th Ins't., in relation to the case of the British schooner "Mont Blanc," captured by the U. S. Steamer "Octorara," Commander Collins, and released by the Prize Court at Key West.

In your letter of the 4th Ins't., which gives a summary of the correspondence in relation to this case, you refer to the order of the prize court, in which "it is declared that the cause of the U. S. against the schooner 'Mont Blanc' and cargo, having come on to be heard, it is ordered by consent of all the parties interested that the vessel and cargo be released to the claimant for the benefit of whom it may concern; that there was *probable cause* for the capture and detention of the vessel and that each party pay his own costs."

And in the same letter you state that "so far as relates to

damages, the ground was expressly taken in the correspondence with Lord Lyons that the master and owner had waived damages by accepting the decree and restitution of his vessel. But there still remained a party and rights which the prize court did not foreclose. That party was the Government of Great Britain, and its claim was one for redress for injuries to its sovereignty and dignity by a violation of her territory. No prize court of our country can try and decide a National claim of this sort."

Your letter of the 14th Ins't. encloses a copy of a note from Lord Lyons, in which he says that on being informed by you that directions to proceed to the assessment of damages in this case would be given to Rear Admiral Bailey, he would on his part take care that proper directions should be sent to Mr. Vice Consul Butterfield and that he, Lord Lyons, is waiting for this information before taking any further steps.

It appears, therefore, that this Depar't is expected to give directions for the assessment of damages in a case where it has repeatedly stated it would be improper for the Department to interfere, where the Judicial tribunal, which had cognizance, had decided that no damages are due, and where it is admitted that the master and owner have renounced all claim to damages.

The Department has been placed in this unfortunate and somewhat anomalous position, partly by its own fault in too readily acquiescing in the proffered reparation by the State Department, and an arrangement that had been made by that Department with Her Majesty's representative, to ascertain and agree upon the damages to be paid, and to consider and dispose of the whole subject.

In consequence of the representations communicated in your letter of the 7th of May, the Department has conveyed to the Commander of the Octorara the Executive censure for doing what the Court has decided he was excusable in doing. Although in this case of the "Mont Blanc," as on repeated occasions, the impropriety of interfering in matters of prize, which belong legitimately to the courts, was freely expressed, yet under the urgent appeals that were made, an assurance that the amount was small, and the case could be more speedily and satisfactorily disposed of, by referring it to some person at or near Key West to consider and dispose of the whole subject without an appeal to the Court, the Department, without fully considering the

effect, and the legal power to afford reparation, was induced, in accordance with your request that some suitable person should be designated to take part in a conference as to damages, to name Acting Rear Admiral Bailey, for it knew no other in that locality unconnected with the Court.

No instructions, however, have yet been given Acting Rear Admiral Bailey, and the case, as it now stands, is such that the Department doubts its power to give the instructions which seem to be required and expected. The powers of the Department are limited by law, and I am aware of no law which authorizes it to decide what you represent as a political claim only to be tried and adjudicated by the two Governments concerned, — "a national claim of this sort." The authority of the Department extends only to legal, individual claims, in cases where it is clearly responsible in law for the acts of its agents. But in this case the law, or the tribunal which had authority to expound and administer the law, has exonerated the agent of the Department from any responsibility. It is admitted that there is no claim in law — only a political claim: no individual claim, but "a national claim."

In such a case the Depar't would be perplexed in attempting to assess the damages, or in instructing others how to assess them. If it admits in this case that the legal renunciation of damages was of no effect, and that the claimant retained a legal claim for damages, it must make the same admission in every case, and ignore a well settled rule of admiralty and international law.

If it undertakes to estimate a pecuniary equivalent for an aggression upon the dignity of a foreign government, its action might seem offensive, while it had every disposition to avoid giving offense. An apology for an injury to "sovereignty and dignity" may be more or less earnest, but how can such injuries be estimated in dollars and cents, or pounds, shillings and pence? It is to be presumed that the British Government does not desire the claim to be considered in this light.

It may be said the amount of damages in this case would be the amount which the Court at Key West would have awarded, had its decision been what a foreign government claims would have been righteous. But the Department cannot assent to this, for it has no authority to repudiate or set aside the decision of a Court of the United States. That can be done only by a

Superior Court or by Congress. It is the duty of this Department to respect and obey the decisions of the Courts of the United States.

It is said that the decree "did not foreclose" the rights of the Government of Great Britain to claim redress in this case. In one sense — to a certain extent — this is true. The decision of the highest court in the land would not be conclusive on a foreign government. But if a claimant voluntarily renounces his claim, or right to appeal, can his government claim that justice has been denied him? Does not ordinary comity "foreclose" any government from taking it for granted that it cannot obtain justice from the tribunals of another, until it has at least made the attempt? In this case of the "Mont Blanc" there was an appeal open to the Supreme Court of the United States. Had it been taken, the result might possibly have been that the decree of the lower court would have been set aside and the case remanded with directions to grant ample damages; or, on the other hand, the decree of the lower court might have been confirmed, for reasons so clear and convincing that the claimant himself would have acquiesced, and his government have been foreclosed by its own sense of justice.

Viewing the matter in this light, it appears to me that the right of the British Government to claim damages in this particular case has been foreclosed, not by the decision of the Prize Court at Key West, but by the acquiescence of the claimants in that decision. The question of damages for injuries to "sovereignty and dignity" is one which this Department has no authority to investigate or settle, and should pecuniary amends be required, it has no fund at its disposal to which the disbursement could be charged.

Acting Rear Admiral Bailey having been designated as a suitable person to confer on the subject of damages, before it was known that the Court had adjudicated the case, I have the honor to enclose herewith a copy of the order which has been sent to that officer, directing him to attend to the duty, should it be further prosecuted, whenever he shall receive instructions from the Secretary of State in the premises.

Very respectfully,
GIDEON WELLES,
Secty. of Navy.

HON. WM. H. SEWARD,
Secty. of State.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
26 August, 1863.

SIR,

In the case of the Mont Blanc, seized by Commander Collins at Sand Cay as a prize, the Court decreed: "That the cause of the U. S. against the schooner 'Mont Blanc' and cargo, having come on to be heard, it is ordered by consent of all the parties interested that the vessel and cargo be restored to the claimant for the benefit of whom it may concern; that there was probable cause for the capture and detention of the vessel, and that each party pay his own costs."

The proper tribunal having thus disposed of the question as between the parties, a further claim is presented by the British Government for damages for violated sovereignty, and the Secretary of State, who has communicated with Her Majesty's representative on this subject, having desired me to designate some person at Key West to confer with Vice Consul Butterfield on the matter of damages, I have presented your name to him for that duty.

The case being, in its present position, one of a political nature, the Secretary of State will furnish you with the necessary instructions, should the subject be prosecuted.

I am, respectfully,
Your Obd't Serv't
GIDEON WELLES,
Secty. of the Navy.

Acting Rear Admiral T. BAILEY,
Commd'g. E. G. B. Squadron,
Key West.

August 25, *Tuesday.* The Rebel accounts of things at Charleston speak of Sumter in ruins, its walls fallen in, and a threatened assault on the city. I do not expect immediate possession of the place, for it will be defended with desperation, pride, courage, Nullification chivalry, which is something Quixotic, with the Lady Dulcineas to stimulate the Secession heroes; but matters are encouraging.

Thus far, the Navy has been the coöperating force, aiding and protecting the army on Morris Island.

August 28, *Friday*. The Rebels are demoralized and discouraged, yet have not the manly resolution to confess it. Great is the tyranny of public opinion in all this land of ours, and little is the individual independence that is exercised. Men surrender their honest convictions to the dictates of others, often of less sense and ability than themselves. The discipline and mandates of party are omnipotent, North as well as South. Toombs of Georgia publishes a letter in which he speaks with freedom and boldness of the wretched condition of affairs among the Rebels, and of the ruin that is before them. This is audacity rather than courage. Toombs is a malcontent. Scarcely a man has contributed more than Toombs to the calamities that are upon us, and I am glad to see that he is aware of the misery which he and his associates have inflicted on the country. I have ever considered him a reckless and audacious partisan, an unfit leader in public affairs, and my mind has not changed in regard to him. Toombs, however, was never a sycophant.

Was at the navy yard with E[dgar] and F[ox] to examine the Clyde, one of the fast boats purchased by the Rebels in England, which was captured by our blockaders.

August 29, *Saturday*. Have reluctantly come to the conclusion to visit the navy yards. It is a matter of duty, and the physicians and friends insist it will be conducive to health and strength. If I could go quietly it would give me pleasure, but I have a positive dislike to notoriety and parade, — not because I dislike well-earned applause, not because I do not need encouragement, but there is so much insincerity in their showy and ostentatious parades, where the heartless and artful are often the most prominent.

The President cordially approves my purpose, which he thinks and says will do me good and strengthen me for coming labors.

Chase has been to me, urging the dispatch of several

vessels to seize the armored ships which are approaching completion in Great Britain and which may be captured off the English coast. The objections are: first, we cannot spare the ships; second, to place a naval force in British waters for the purpose indicated would be likely to embroil us with that power; third, the Secretary of State assures me in confidence that the armored vessels building in England will not be allowed to leave. This third objection, which, if reliable, is in itself a sufficient reason for non-action on my part, I am not permitted to communicate to the Secretary of the Treasury, who is a part of the government and ought to know the fact. It may be right that the commercial community, who are deeply interested and who, of course, blame me for not taking more active and energetic measures, should be kept in ignorance of the true state of the case, but why withhold the truth from the Secretary of the Treasury? If he is not to be trusted, he is unfit for his place; but it is not because he is not to be trusted. These little things injure the Administration, and are in themselves wrong. I am, moreover, compelled to rely on the oral, unwritten statement of the Secretary of State, who may be imposed upon and deceived, who is often mistaken; and, should those vessels escape, the blame for not taking preliminary steps to seize them will fall heavily on me. It grieves Chase at this moment and lessens me in his estimation, because I am doing nothing against these threatened marauders and can give him no sufficient reasons why I am not.

The subject of a reunion is much discussed. Shall we receive back the Rebel States? is asked of me daily. The question implies that the States have seceded, — actually gone out from us, — that the Union is at present dissolved, which I do not admit. People have rebelled, some voluntarily, some by compulsion. Discrimination should be made in regard to them. Some should be hung, some exiled, some fined, etc., and all who remain should do so on conditions satisfactory and safe. I do not trouble myself about

the Emancipation Proclamation, which disturbs so many. If New York can establish slavery or imprison for debt, so can Georgia. The States are and must be equal in political rights. No one State can be restricted or denied privileges or rights which the others possess, or have burdens or conditions imposed from which its co-States are exempt. The Constitution must be amended, and our Union and system of government changed, to reach what is demanded by extreme men in this matter.

XII

Return from a Tour among the Navy Yards — Abuse of the Writ of Habeas Corpus in connection with the Draft — The President suspends the Writ on Military Questions — Newspaper Alarm over the Ironclads building in England — Seward communicates the Assurances of the British Ministry in regard to the Rams — The News of Chickamauga — The President laments the Inefficiency of the Generals — The President's Opinion of Farragut — The Failure at Sabine Pass — The English Government prevents the Laird Ram from coming out — The Russian Fleet arrives at New York — Reinforcing Rosecrans — An Irregular Proceeding of Seward's — The Conduct of the Generals at Chickamauga — A Report about the Laird Ram.

September 11, *Friday*. I left Washington on the 31st *ult.* on an official visit to the several navy yards. Have a good report of affairs during my absence. Met the members of the Cabinet with the exception of Stanton at the regular meeting. All glad to see me, — none more so than the President, who cordially and earnestly greeted me. I have been less absent than any other member and was therefore perhaps more missed.

Had a call from Admiral Farragut of a most cheerful and friendly character. Also from Commodore Pennock from Cairo.

September 12, *Saturday*. Exceedingly busy in bringing up and disposing of matters which accumulated during my absence. Admiral Farragut and a few friends to dine with me. The more I see and know of Farragut, the better I like him. He has the qualities I supposed when he was selected. The ardor and sincerity which struck me during the Mexican War when he wished to take Vera Cruz, with the unassuming and the unpresuming gentleness of a true hero.

September 14, *Monday*. The President called a special

Cabinet council this morning at eleven. The course pursued by certain judges is, he says, defeating the draft. They are discharging the drafted men rapidly under *habeas corpus*, and he is determined to put a stop to these factious and mischievous proceedings if he has the authority. The Secretary of State and Attorney-General have each been consulted and declare they have no doubt of his authority. Mr. Blair was satisfied the President had the legal power, but whether the measure proposed, which is an order from the President directing the provost marshals to disregard the writ, or to make return that the person to be discharged was held by authority of the President, was perhaps not the best process. Mr. Chase feared civil war would be inaugurated if the privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus* was suspended. Mr. Usher had doubts and uncertainties.

The President was very determined, and intimated that he would not only enforce the law, but if Judge Lowry and others continued to interfere and interrupt the draft he would send them after Vallandigham. As considerable discussion had taken place, he was prepared to act, though willing to listen to, and, if mistaken, to defer to, others. Up to this point neither Mr. Stanton or myself had taken part in the discussion, though Stanton had undoubtedly expressed his opinion and prompted the proposed action.

I remarked that the subject was not new to me, — that I had two or three times experienced this interference by judges to release men from service, not in relation to the recent draft, but that we were and had been suffering constant annoyance. Vessels were delayed on the eve of sailing, by interference of State judges, who assumed jurisdiction and authority to discharge enlisted men in the national service in time of war, on *habeas corpus*. I had as high regard and reverence for that writ as any one, but it seemed to me there should be some way to prevent its abuse. A factious and evil-minded judge — and we had

many such holding State appointments — could embarrass the Government, could delay the departure of a vessel on an important mission, involving perhaps war or peace, or interrupt great military movements by an abused exercise of this writ, — could stop armies on the march. I had questioned whether a local State or municipal judge should have this power to control national naval and military operations in a civil war, during the existence of hostilities, and suggested that, especially in time of war, United States judges were the only proper officers to decide in these naval and military cases affecting the law and service of the United States. Hitherto the Army had suffered less than the Navy, and I was not sorry the subject had been brought forward by others.

The President said he would prepare and submit a paper at an adjourned meeting for criticism to-morrow at 9 A.M.

September 15, *Tuesday.* The President read the paper which he had drawn up. Mr. Chase proposed as a preferable course that the President should, pursuant to the act of the 3rd of March last, suspend by proclamation the privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus* on military questions. This proposition, after discussion, met with favor from all, and the Council adjourned to 1 P.M. for Mr. Seward to prepare a proclamation. On meeting at one o'clock, the draft which Mr. Seward had prepared was criticized and after some modifications was ordered to be recopied and carried into effect. All came into the arrangement cordially after Stanton read the reports of sundry provost marshals and others detailing the schemes practiced for defeating the draft.

The question is raised whether the executive can suspend the privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus* without Congressional action. If the executive can suspend in the cases specified, which is generally admitted, the policy of falling back on the act of the 3d of March last is more than questionable, for if Congress has, as claimed, the

exclusive right, can it delegate away that right? If the right is in the Executive, it is not wise nor proper to place the proclamation on the delegated grant in the law of last March which is made the basis of the proclamation. I think I am not mistaken in my impression that Mr. Chase is one of those who has claimed that the President had the constitutional right to suspend the privilege of this writ, yet he was to-day sensitive beyond all others in regard to it and proposed relying on the act of Congress instead of the constitutional Executive prerogative. He feared if the President acted on Executive authority a civil war in the Free States would be inevitable; fears popular tumult, would not offend Congress, etc. I have none of his apprehensions, and if it is the duty of the President, would not permit legislative aggression, but maintain the prerogative of the Executive.

Commander Shufeldt, an officer of ability, gives me trouble by a restless but natural desire for change and more active employment. Wishes an independent command, is dissatisfied to be in the South Atlantic Squadron. Inadmissible. It is only recently he has been reinstated in the service, on my special recommendation and by my efforts, against the remonstrance of many officers and their friends in and out of Congress. Now to give him choice of position over others who never left the service would be unjust. I cannot do it. Duty on his present station is arduous, irksome, exhausting; some one must perform it were he to leave.

September 16, *Wednesday.* Dispatches and also a private letter from Dahlgren speak of the assault and repulse at Sumter. Neither is clear and explicit. I should judge it had been a hasty and not very thoroughly matured movement.

September 17, *Thursday.* Unpleasant rumors of a disagreement between Dahlgren and Gillmore and that the

latter had requested to be relieved of his present command. This, I think, must be a mischievous rumor, — perhaps a speculative one.

A new panic is rising respecting the ironclads in England, and some of our sensation journals fan the excitement. It does not surprise me that the *New York Times*, Raymond's paper, controlled by Thurlow Weed, and all papers influenced by Seward should be alarmed. The latter knows those vessels are to be detained, yet will not come out and state the fact, but is not unwilling to have apprehension excited. It will glorify him if it is said they are detained through protest from our minister. If he does not prompt the *Times*, he could check its loud apprehensions. I am under restrictions which prevent me from making known facts that would dissipate this alarm. The *Evening Post*, I am sorry to see, falls in with the *Times* and its managers, and unwittingly assists those whom it does not admire. Both these journals are importunate, and insist that the Roanoke shall be returned to New York. But the Navy Department is not under newspaper control, though they have the coöperation of distinguished men. To station a steam frigate in New York would involve the necessity of stationing one also in the Delaware, and another at Boston. There would be no limit to the demand for naval defenses, yet it is claimed the coast defenses belong exclusively to the military.

September 18, *Friday*. The proclamation suspending the privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus* has been generally well received. I have never feared the popular pulse would not beat a heathful response even to a stringent measure in these times, if the public good demanded it.

At the Cabinet-meeting Chase inquired of Seward how he and the Secretary of the Navy got on with the English ironclad rams. Seward treated the matter lightly and turned the conversation aside skillfully, I thought,

for I was interested in the question. No one could do this more adroitly than he. On returning from the Cabinet I found upon my table two letters received by the noon mail, one from Consul Dudley of Liverpool of the 5th and one from Consul Cleaveland at Cardiff of the 3rd, both private, but each warning me, earnestly, that the English government manifested no intention to detain these vessels, and expressing their belief that they will be allowed to leave.

I went directly to the State Department with these letters, which I read to Seward, and reminded him of our conversation in August when he quieted my apprehension so far that I left Washington to visit the navy yards, by assurances which he had received that we should not be disturbed by these formidable vessels.

He answered very pleasantly that he remembered the interview and the assurances he gave me, and seemed not the least disturbed by the information of threatened danger. On the contrary he appeared gratified and self-satisfied. After a remark or two of assumed indifference, he saw I was in earnest and not to be put off with mere words. He suddenly asked if I was a mason. I replied I was, but this was a matter of public concern. He said he wanted to tell me a secret which I must not communicate to any *living* person, and he should be unwilling to tell it to me on other consideration while things were in their present condition. He must enjoin upon me especially not to tell the President, nor let him know I had been informed, for he should himself probably let the President have the fact which he was about to disclose to me. "You must promise me," said he, "that you will neither communicate nor talk about it."

I said that any matter thus communicated I should not be likely to repeat, but I must necessarily talk about these rams and communicate with others concerning them, — it was my business and duty to do it. I had come to him to talk about them, and I must, from the information I

had, some of which I had just submitted, take action unless I had something from him to justify my abstaining to move.

He had a hesitating and inquiring look. "If," said he, "England lets these vessels out we must let loose our privateers."

This I had repeatedly said on previous occasions, and I now fully concurred, but I had delayed extra efforts in consequence of his assurances, and we are in no condition for these troubles. We must act, and with promptness and energy, unless he had something to say as a preventive.

"Well, they won't come out," said he. "The English Ministry are our friends with the exception of the chief. His course and conduct are execrable, and with his organ are *damnable*. I don't know," continued S., "what he, the premier, means. For certain reasons they gave out on the 4th of November that the government could do nothing to prevent the rams from coming out. On the 5th of November, the next day, they gave us assurances they should not come out. They will be retained in port, but you must not know this fact, nor must any one else know it. Mr. Adams is not aware of it. No one but you and the President and I must know it here, and it is best that he should not know that you know it."

"Do you mean to say," I asked, "that this state of facts was communicated to you last November, — nearly one year ago?" "No," replied he, "did I say November? I meant September. I have dispatches here. I have not read all. I left the Cabinet early, as you observed."

After some farther remarks, some additional injunctions, assurances that no member of the Cabinet knew or must be allowed to know anything on the subject, — there was a necessity that I should be informed, but yet appear to the world as if I were not informed, — some allusions to the Emma, recently captured and taken into service, our interview terminated. Before leaving, however, he

expressed a wish that we had a fast steamer off Brest to capture the Florida, without recollecting that neither of our good neutral friends of England and France will allow us to coal or remain in port over twenty-four hours.

The information thus given in confidence relieves me of much labor and anxiety, yet I am not without some anxiety. I dislike this mystery, this reticence towards our colleagues in the government. Should the English fail us, or Seward find it convenient under a calamitous condition of affairs to deny what he has told me, or claim that he was misunderstood, I could not escape censure and condemnation. There is no record or writing in my possession. I have, on verbal, confidential assurances, omitted to take precautionary measures, which, without those assurances, I should have taken, and it was my duty to take, last August and now. If the rams come out and damage us, the denunciations against me will be severe, and I am without remedy but must bear the odium of neglect and inaction, for I cannot make public what has been told me.

The Emma was not a naval capture. She was taken by the Arago, an army transport, and was purchased under order of the court by the Navy. Her Majesty's representative is pressing the question of sale to the Navy of this vessel, captured by an army transport, for a purpose.

September 21, *Monday.* A battle was fought on Saturday near Chattanooga and resumed yesterday. Am apprehensive our troops have suffered and perhaps are in danger. As yet the news is not sufficiently definite.

The President came to me this afternoon with the latest news. He was feeling badly. Tells me a dispatch was sent to him at the Soldiers' Home shortly after he got asleep, and so disturbed him that he had no more rest, but arose and came to the city and passed the remainder of the night awake and watchful. He has a telegram this P.M. which he brings me that is more encouraging. Our men stood well their ground and fought like Union heroes for

their country and cause. We conclude the Rebels have concentrated a large force to overpower Rosecrans and recapture Chattanooga. While this has been doing, Halleck has frittered away time and dispersed our forces. Most of Grant's effective force appears to have been sent across the Mississippi, where a large force is not needed. Burnside is in northeastern Tennessee, two hundred miles away from Chattanooga. While our men are thus scattered, a large division from Lee's army in our front has been sent under Longstreet to Bragg; and Hill's and Ewell's corps, it is reported, are there also. I trust this account is exaggerated, though the President gives it credence. I do not learn, nor can I ascertain, that General Halleck was apprised of, or even suspected, what was being done; certainly he has made no preparation. The President is, I perceive, not satisfied, but yet he does not censure or complain. Better, perhaps, if he did.

I expressed surprise to the President at the management and his forbearance, and it touched him. I asked what Meade was doing with his immense army and Lee's skeleton and depleted show in front. He said he could not learn that Meade was doing anything, or wanted to do anything. "It is," said he, "the same old story of this Army of the Potomac. Imbecility, inefficiency — don't want to *do* — is defending the Capital. I inquired of Meade," said he, "what force was in front. Meade replied he thought there were 40,000 infantry. I replied he might have said 50,000, and if Lee with 50,000 could defend their capital against our 90,000, — and if defense is all our armies are to do, — we might, I thought, detach 50,000 from his command, and thus leave him with 40,000 to defend us. Oh," groaned the President, "it is terrible, terrible, this weakness, this indifference of our Potomac generals, with such armies of good and brave men."

"Why," said I, "not rid yourself of Meade, who may be a good man and a good officer but is not a great general, has not breadth or strength, certainly is not the man

for the position he occupies? The escape of Lee with his army across the Potomac has distressed me almost beyond any occurrence of the War. And the impression made upon me in the personal interview shortly after was not what I wished, had inspired no confidence, though he is faithful and will obey orders; but he can't originate."

The President assented to all I said, but "What can I do," he asked, "with such generals as we have? Who among them is any better than Meade? To sweep away the whole of them from the chief command and substitute a new man would cause a shock, and be likely to lead to combinations and troubles greater than we now have. I see all the difficulties as you do. They oppress me."

Alluding to the failures of the generals, particularly those who commanded the armies of the Potomac, he thought the selections, if unfortunate, were not imputable entirely to him. The Generals-in-Chief and the Secretary of War should, he said, know the men better than he. The Navy Department had given him no trouble in this respect; perhaps naval training was more uniform and equal than the military. I thought not; said we had our troubles, but they were less conspicuous. In the selection of Farragut and Porter, I thought we had been particularly fortunate; and Du Pont had merit also. He thought there had not been, take it all in all, so good an appointment in either branch of the service as Farragut, whom he did not know or recollect when I gave him command. Du Pont he classed, and has often, with McClellan, but Porter he considers a busy schemer, bold but not of high qualities as a chief. For some reason he has not so high an appreciation of Porter as I think he deserves, but no man surpasses Farragut in his estimation.

In returning to Secretary Seward a dispatch of Minister Dayton at Paris, in relation to the predatory Rebel Florida, asking one or more fast steamers to intercept that vessel, which is now at Brest, I took a different view from the two gentlemen. To blockade Brest would require not

less than five vessels. If we could spare five such vessels, whence would they get supply of fuel, etc.? England and France allow only sufficient to take the vessel home; and for three months thereafter our vessels receiving supplies are excluded from their ports. As England and France have recognized the Rebels, who have no commerce, no navy, no nationality, as the equals of the United States, with whom they have treaties, and, professedly, amicable relations, I deem it best under the circumstances to abstain from proceedings which would be likely to complicate and embroil us, and would leave those countries to develop the policy which shall govern themselves and nations in the future. They must abide the consequences.

. . . . . .

September 22, *Tuesday.* But little additional intelligence from Rosecrans and the South. We have information of a failure on our part at Sabine Pass, where an attempt was made to capture formidable batteries with frail boats, the army as spectators. The expedition appears to have been badly conceived, planned, and executed. A large military force was sent to take these batteries. Neither General Halleck nor the Secretary of War consulted the Navy in this matter. General Banks appears to have originated it, and made a requisition on Commodore Bell, who readily responded, in the absence of Farragut, with light boats built for transporting passengers in Northern rivers. Admiral Farragut was at the Navy Department when dispatches were received from Commodore Bell, stating that application for coöperation and aid had been made on him, and how he had answered the call. When Farragut read the dispatch, he laid down the paper and said to me: "The expedition will be a failure. The army officers have an impression that naval vessels can do anything; this call is made for boats to accompany an army expedition; it is expected the Navy will capture the batteries, and, the army being there in

force with a general in command, they will take the credit. But there will be no credit in the case, and you may expect to hear of disaster. These boats which Bell has given them cannot encounter batteries; they might cooperate with and assist the army, but that is evidently not the object. The soldiers should land and attack in the rear, and the vessels aid them in front. But that is not the army plan. The soldiers are not to land until the Navy had done an impossibility, with such boats. Therefore there will be disaster." The news of to-day verifies his prediction. This Sabine expedition was substituted, I suppose, for that of Indianola, which I suggested, and we may now have the promised word of General Halleck. He will have heard from Banks.

September 23. Stanton tells me that General Meade is in town. I trust some efficient blows to be struck now that Lee is weak. The opportunity should not be lost, but the army is to me a puzzle. I do not find that Stanton has much to say or do. If there are facilities of combination and concentration, it is not developed. No offensive movements here; no assistance has been rendered Rosecrans. For four weeks the Rebels have been operating to overwhelm him, but not a move has been made, a step taken, or an order given, that I can learn. Halleck has done nothing, proposed nothing, and is now just beginning to take measures to reinforce Rosecrans. Has he the mind, energy, or any of the qualities or capabilities for the important position assigned him?

September 24, *Thursday.* I am more desponding than I care to acknowledge. The army management distresses all of us, but we must not say so. It is no time for fault-finding; besides I understand there is a move to reinforce the army in Tennessee.

Last July, on the suggestion of Seward, I was in consultation with him, Stanton, and Halleck in regard to

Texas. Neither Stanton nor Halleck had any views on the subject, nor a proposition or suggestion to make. I proposed a descent on Indianola. Halleck did not know where it was. Would consent to nothing, nor to any consideration of the subject, till he heard from Banks; would then immediately notify Seward and myself. This was at least two months ago, and the last I have heard from Major-General Halleck, until we are now told General Banks organized an expedition to Texas. Heigho! the Sabine Pass?

September 25, *Friday.* The President was not with us to-day at the Cabinet-meeting, being at the War Department with Stanton. All were present but them. Little known of army movements, but anxiety on the part of each. The English Government has interposed to prevent the armored rams built by the Lairds from coming out. Seward announced the fact, and also that he had placed me under injunctions of secrecy. This was the reason why no explanation had been given for my non-action, for which I have been much blamed.

Things look a little threatening from France, but Louis Napoleon may not persist when he learns that England has changed her policy. Should we meet with defeat at Chattanooga, it is by no means certain England will not again assume unfriendly airs, and refer the question of the departure of the armored ships to the "law officers of the Crown." Our own ironclads and the fear of privateers which would ruin her commerce are, however, the best law, and our best safeguards.

The Russian fleet has come out of the Baltic and are now in New York, or a large number of the vessels have arrived. They are not to be confined in the Baltic by a northern winter. In sending them to this country at this time there is something significant. What will be its effect on France and the French policy we shall learn in due time. It may moderate; it may exasperate. God bless the Russians.

September 26, *Saturday*. We have had for a week, commencing last Saturday, unusually cool weather for the season in this climate. I have found a fire agreeable and necessary for pleasant work every day in my library at home and also at the Department. The weather has been admirable for army operations, but I do not learn that there have been any movements in this vicinity on the part of our friends.

General Halleck has earnestly and constantly smoked cigars and rubbed his elbows, while the Rebels have been vigorously concentrating their forces to overwhelm Rosecrans. We all, except General Halleck, know that Longstreet with 20,000 men has gone from Lee's army somewhere. The information does not seem to have reached Halleck; if it has he has taken no measures in regard to it. Not a man until within three days and probably too late was sent to Rosecrans, who held the key that controlled the Rebel centre, and of which they must dispossess him or their cause is endangered. H. has never seemed to realize the importance of that position — nor, I am sorry to say, of any other.

I learned from the President that two divisions of the army under Hooker are moving to strengthen Rosecrans. It was decided at the War Department that an effort should be made. Seward and Chase were there, and I think the latter suggested the movement, which was warmly seconded and adopted by Stanton. The President does not say how active a part he took, but from our conversations I know his anxiety for this step has been great.

The most reliable account we have of the battle leaves little doubt we were beaten, and only the skill and valor of General Thomas and his command saved the whole concern from a disastrous defeat. McCook and Crittenden are reported to have behaved ingloriously. There is obscurity and uncertainty respecting Rosecrans on the last day that should be cleared up. Reasons, as yet un-

explained, may have existed for his withdrawal, but these defects are always painful.

September 28, *Monday.* The last arrivals indicate a better tone and temper in England, and I think in France also. From the articles in their papers, Cole's letter, etc., I think our monitors and heavy ordnance have had a peaceful tendency, a tranquillizing effect. The guns of the Weehawken have knocked the breath out of British statesmen as well as the crew of the Atlanta. The "swamp angel," as they call Gillmore's gun which throws shot from Morris Island into Charleston, has made itself felt and heard in England.

The President sent for me this noon. I found Seward with him, reading his dispatches for the next steamer. One to Dayton somewhat interesting, to Motley and others commonplace.

A letter which he had prepared, to Stuart in the absence of Lord Lyons, in the case of the Emma, was the special occasion of calling me to the interview. This vessel had run the blockade, but the Arago, an army transport, falling in with her, the commander became alarmed and commenced throwing overboard his cargo of cotton and putting on more steam in order to escape. Her efforts excited suspicion, and the Arago ran down to the Emma, which surrendered. The captain acknowledged her guilt, and she was brought into New York. The District Attorney procured an order of sale from the court, the Navy Department took her at her appraised value, and she was sent to the Navy Yard for alterations, adapting her to naval purposes. It now transpires that Mr. Seward in May last, without consulting or communicating with others, made a strange promise to Mr. Stuart, that he would get an opinion from the Attorney-General as to the construction of an act passed by the last Congress in relation to the sale of captured neutral vessels. In the mean time he pledged himself to Her Majesty's representative

that no sale should take place until there was a decision on the point which Mr. Stuart, or Mr. Seward, or both thought of doubtful validity. But the Attorney-General, was pressed with business, had been absent some weeks in Missouri, and his opinion did not come in until late. In the mean time the Emma had been sold to the Navy and transferred to the navy yard, where she had undergone a complete transformation.

Mr. Seward now finds himself embarrassed by the promise which he inconsiderately made and of which impropriety none of us were advised; says the faith of the State Department is pledged, and he wishes all proceedings stopped till the court shall have decided on the validity of the capture. The President had been appealed to, and, though evidently annoyed by the hasty and imprudent action of Mr. Seward, he desired the appeal of the Secretary of State should be considered, and his pledge redeemed. I informed him that the sale had been made, the transfer completed, the vessel had been for weeks at the navy yard undergoing repairs and alterations, that she was an entirely different craft from what she was when captured, that the best we could do under the circumstances was to detain her at the yard and not put her in commission.

These irregular and unauthorized proceedings are cause of constant difficulty and embarrassment, and are very injurious to the public service. We want and have prepared this vessel for special duty, which, had we known the pledges of the Secretary of State, we should have allotted differently. As it is, the government must sustain loss and the Navy Department be straitened by this irregularity.

The President read to Seward and myself a detailed confidential dispatch from Chattanooga very derogatory to Crittenden and McCook, who wilted when every energy and resource should have been put forth, disappeared from the battle-field, returned to Chattanooga,

and — went to sleep. The officers who did their duty are dissatisfied. We had their statements last week, which this confidential dispatch confirms. It makes some, but not a very satisfactory, excuse for Rosecrans, in whom the President has clearly lost confidence. He said he was urged to change all the officers, but thought he should limit his acts to Crittenden and McCook; said it would not do to send one of our generals from the East. I expressed a doubt if he had any one suitable for that command or the equal of Thomas, if a change was to be made. There was no one in the army who, from what I had seen and known of him, was so fitted for that command as General Thomas. Rosecrans had stood well with the country until this time, but Thomas was a capable general, had undoubted merit, and was a favorite with the men. Seward thought the whole three — Rosecrans, Crittenden, and McCook — should be removed.

September 29, *Tuesday*. No matter of special importance; nothing but current business in Cabinet. Seward and Stanton were not present. The latter seems to make it a point recently not to attend. Others, therefore, run to him. I will not. Military operations are of late managed at the War Department, irrespective of the rest of the Cabinet, or of all who do not go there. This is not difficult, for the President spends much of his time there. Seward and Chase make daily visitations to Stanton, sometimes two or three times daily. I have not the time, nor do I want the privilege, though I doubtless could have it for Stanton treats me respectfully and with as much confidence as he does any one when I approach him, except Seward. But I cannot run to the War Department and pay court in order to obtain information that should be given. Chase does this, complains because he is compelled to do it, and then, when not bluffed, becomes reconciled. To-day he expressed great disgust towards Halleck; says Halleck has done nothing while the Rebels were concentrating,

has sent no reinforcements to Rosecrans and did not propose to send any. Those that had gone were ordered by Stanton. Halleck, he said, was good for nothing, and everybody knew it but the President.

A large delegation of extreme party men is here from Missouri to see the President and Cabinet. So intense and fierce in their party animosities, that they would, if in their power, be more revengeful—inflict greater injury—on those Republicans, friends of the Administration, who do not conform to their extreme radical and fanatical views than on the Rebels in the field. The hate and narrow partisanship exhibited in many of the States, when there should be some forbearance, some tolerance, some spirit of kindness, are among the saddest features of the times.

September 30, *Wednesday.* I am warned and admonished in various quarters that Laird's vessel is about to make a trial trip, and that it will extend across the Atlantic. My omission to make preparations is stigmatized as negligence, indifference, and worse.

Am sorry Seward treats the subject so gingerly. When Palmerston or Earl Russell prates about their foreign enlistment act, and that it is uncertain whether the law has really been violated by Laird, Americans must be provoked. If their municipal legislation is weak and inefficient, why is it not corrected? There are international obligations which cannot be disregarded. Let us have good faith, peace or war!

XIII

Slow Progress at Charleston — Letter to the President in reference to Instructions to Naval Officers — Seward refers the Spanish Claim of Maritime Jurisdiction to the King of Belgium — Conversation with Admiral Milne of the British Navy — A Political Letter of McClellan's — The Ohio and Pennsylvania Elections — Lincoln's Magnanimity to Meade — General Sickles's Account of Gettysburg — Meade's "Strategy" — The Unaccredited Minister from Venezuela desires to purchase a Naval Vessel — General Terry and Colonel Hawley on Dahlgren — An Unjust Complaint from Admiral Du Pont.

October 1, *Thursday.* Complaints of slow progress at Charleston reach us. Censure is thrown upon Dahlgren which is not altogether just. His undue promotion requires extraordinary ability and effort to lift him above the rivalries and jealousies of his contemporaries in the profession. He has prudence, caution, intelligence, but not the dash and fearless daring to distinguish himself which would reconcile them to the favoritism he has experienced. Then, worse than this, the Navy, and he as commander in a conjoint movement, encounter the army jealousy. All failures, or any want of success, is imputed to the Navy, though entirely blameless, and though the fault, if any, is with the military. Without the Navy, Morris Island could not be retained by the army, and all proceedings would terminate, yet the Navy gets no credit. Its services are not properly appreciated, and General Gillmore, though a good engineer, is, I apprehend, not adapted to full command, — cannot manage men, and has the infirmities which belong to engineers and those who are trained to secondary and scientific positions. They can criticize, and blame others without the faculty of accomplishing great results themselves.

October 3, *Saturday.* Mr. Seward called early this morn-

ing and read me the draft of a proclamation for Thanksgiving. I complimented the paper as very well done, and him for his talent in the preparation of such papers, which pleased him; but he made a remark to which I did not respond as favorably. He said it had been formerly claimed that Thanksgivings were a State institution, a State prerogative; he thought it a good time and opportunity to extinguish that claim and make such days national. I remarked there might be propriety, as at this time, in designating a day to be observed throughout the whole country, but there were occasions when a people in one State or section had reasons for special thanks, which reasons might not exist in other sections, as for a bountiful harvest in some latitudes when there might be famine and drought in others; that the most which could be done was recommendatory, and the practice was, I believed, now voluntary everywhere, but that until comparatively recently the observance of Thanksgiving and also of Fast was in my State compulsory, and "all servile labor and vain recreation" on those days were "by law prohibited"; that it would hardly do to make this institution national with mandatory orders, such as some States had ordered.

I called on the President this afternoon relative to certain proposed instructions which he, at the suggestion of Mr. Seward, wished should be issued to naval officers. He had been bored with troublesome company and was weary and exhausted. As I opened my portfolio the quantity of papers disturbed him. I stated briefly the case, which, being one of Seward's, he did not distinctly remember, and remarked the subject was, I thought, more important than he apprehended, that I had given it much time and thought, and it had increased in magnitude the more I had considered it. He became interested, recalled the case, and desired me to leave the papers with him and he would read them by himself. His mind was still confused and he wished to understand the subject more

fully. Mr. Seward, whose inconsiderate and imprudent promises have involved him in difficulty, and who in consequence aims to involve the Administration in a most unwise and injudicious proceeding, will have an opportunity to read and digest my report. It will, I think, do him good and Lord Lyons no harm. Fox and Faxon both urge me to send a duplicate to the State Department, that the papers may be placed on file. [The correspondence follows.]

Executive Mansion,
Washington, July 25, 1863.

Hon. Secretary of the Navy,

Sir,

Certain matters have come to my notice, and considered by me, which induce me to believe that it will conduce to the public interest for you to add to the general instructions given to our Naval Commanders, in relation to contraband trade, propositions substantially as follows, to wit: —

1st. "You will avoid the reality, and as far as possible, the appearance of using any neutral port to watch neutral vessels and then to dart out and seize them on their departure."

Note — "Complaint has been made that this has been practised at the Port of St. Thomas, which practice, if it exist, is disapproved and must cease."

2d. "You will not in any case detain the crew of a captured neutral vessel, or any other subject of a neutral power on board such vessel as prisoners of war or otherwise, except the small number necessary as witnesses in the prize court."

Note — "The practice here forbidden is also charged to exist, which, if true, is disapproved and must cease."

My dear Sir, it is not intended to be insinuated that you have been remiss in the performance of the arduous and responsible duties of your Department, which I take pleasure in affirming has, in your hands, been conducted with admirable success. Yet while your subordinates are, almost of necessity, brought into angry collision with the subjects of foreign States, the representatives of those States and yourself do not come into immediate contact for the purpose of keeping the peace, in spite of such collisions. At that point there is an ultimate and heavy responsibility upon me.

What I propose is in strict accordance with international law, and is therefore unobjectionable; while if it do no other good, it will contribute to sustain a considerable portion of the present British Ministry in their places, who, if displaced, are sure to be replaced by others more unfavorable to us.

Your Obd't Serv't
ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
30 Sept: 1863.

SIR:

Since the interview with you some weeks since, in relation to certain proposed instructions to our Naval Officers, I have, as suggested, given the subject careful and thorough investigation, and am fully satisfied that neither in British law nor British practice is there any authority or precedent for such instructions. As Her Majesty's representative has introduced the subject, I have embodied what I believe to be the law and usage on the several points, in a distinct paper, which can, if you think proper, be submitted to Lord Lyons, and if I have in that document done injustice in any respect to British authority and British usage, or misapprehended or misstated international law, I shall be happy to be corrected.

Permit me in this connection to express my surprise and regret that the British Minister should so persistently insist on interfering in matters that belong to the Prize Courts, and on which he should not be heard from diplomatically, as, were Great Britain in our case and we in hers, the American Minister in London would not be heard diplomatically until judicial remedies have been exhausted. His right to be heard in the Court of Prize, according to its rules of procedure, and in the proper cases, is unquestioned. If the Court, after its appellate jurisdiction is fully exhausted, should fail to do justice in any case then undoubtedly, and not till then, diplomacy may properly come in. But I do not understand by what authority Her Majesty's Minister intervenes at all, even in the Prize Courts by suggestion, or before you, in cases where the violation of territorial immunities of Neutral powers, other than Great Britain, is in question.

If our Naval Officers violate the sovereignty, or the neutrality, or the municipal regulations, of a neutral state, we are, first

in our Prize Courts and then diplomatically, amenable for that violation to the neutral state itself, and not to Great Britain, even though the act of violation has been perpetrated there by us upon a British vessel. There is no principle of international law better settled than this, and I respectfully insist that no one but the sovereign of the neutral territory which is violated, has the slightest right to allege or suggest such violation, even in our prize courts, and much less diplomatically.

As regards persons on board of captured neutral vessels the best rule of law is that they shall be sent in as witnesses; the requirement of law is that some be sent in; and if the captor fails to send them all in, he so fails at his peril of not sending enough; and if he sends them all in, all being neutral, no one has the right anywhere to complain of him, provided only that he had probable cause for capturing the ship.

But in the war in which we are now engaged, it must be remembered that no inconsiderable portion of the persons captured on some of the vessels, claiming to be neutral, are rebels. It is impossible for the captor to decide who, or how many are rebels. It certainly is not advisable to go counter to the rule so framed by all the Courts, nor to release captured rebel prisoners.

I am not unaware of your strong desire to conciliate Great Britain and to make all reasonable concessions to preserve friendly relations with her. In this feeling I cordially participate. But my earnest conviction is that we shall best command the respect which insures peace, by firmly, but not offensively, maintaining our rights; and in no way can amicable relations with Great Britain and others be so surely maintained as by our claiming only what is right, by surrendering nothing that is clearly and indisputably our own, and by referring always the question of what our just rights are to those tribunals of Prize, which are instituted by the consent of nations to adjudge these points, under the law of nations and in the interests of peace, by reason of the acknowledged inability of diplomacy, even in the most skilful hands, to deal satisfactorily, before-hand, with these complicated questions as they arise.

I am, respectfully, &c.

GIDEON WELLES,
Secty of Navy.

THE PRESIDENT.

Memoranda submitted for the consideration of the President, upon the proposed Instructions to Naval Officers: —

It is suggested at the instance it would seem of the British Government, or at least in conformity with its views and wishes, that our Naval Officers in command of the vessels composing our Navy, and at present engaged in belligerent operations, shall be instructed by the government in the following terms: —

"1. — You will avoid the reality, and as far as possible the appearance, of using any neutral port to watch neutral vessels and then to dart out and seize them on their departure."

"2. — You will not, in any case, detain the crew of a captured neutral vessel, as prisoners of war, or otherwise, except the small number necessary as witnesses in the prize court."

In considering the expediency of issuing at this time these instructions to our Naval commanders, it is proper, in the first place, to bear in mind, that if issued by us they will be, so far as is known, without any precedent in the history of the Naval service of any country engaged in war.

It should be observed, in the second place, that such instructions would impose upon our naval officers restrictions and limitations in the performance of their duties which are in no wise imposed upon them by any established principle or fixed rules of international law.

It must be borne in mind, in the third place, as being alike important and extraordinary, that this government is so urged to issue to its naval commanders these stringently restrictive instructions, without having the slightest guarantee that similar restrictions will be imposed in neutral ports upon the predatory sea-rovers under the rebel flag, whom neutral powers, under the lead of Great Britain, have already regarded and treated, in these ports, as having belligerent rights.

It should not be forgotten, in the fourth place, that this government is now urged to issue these instructions without any assurance by Great Britain, or any other neutral power, that if issued and acted upon by us in this war with the rebels, who have no Navy and no commerce, they will be held by Great Britain, or any other power, to constitute for it a precedent or a rule of action in its exercise of belligerent rights in any war, civil or international, in which it may hereafter engage; nor

is the slightest intimation given that such instructions to our naval commanders now will induce, or tend to induce Great Britain, or any other neutral power, to abandon or to modify in our favor any course of action or policy in the present war, of which we have complained, or have had reason to complain.

In the fifth place, these proposed instructions seem to stand upon an unsound principle. It is a fundamental principle of public law that the neutral sovereign himself — and not the belligerent cruiser who lawfully resorts to the ports or waters within his jurisdiction — is the guardian of this neutrality, and of all its immunities and privileges. In his own prize courts he must, in every case where he can obtain jurisdiction, do justice, upon the claim of any party injured by the infraction of his neutral privilege. In the prize courts of the belligerent government, he, the neutral sovereign, can alone be heard, even to claim such redress for such violation of his neutrality. So, too, neutrality having its duties as well as its rights, the public law holds the neutral government, and it alone, responsible to all concerned, for any violation of neutrality within the limits of its jurisdiction. In the absence of treaty stipulations to the contrary, every neutral government exercises the right to determine and prescribe for itself, upon its responsibility, the conditions of ingress, egress, sojourn and conduct within its ports and territorial waters, upon which alone it will permit belligerent cruisers to resort to those places and enjoy such, and only such, of their accommodations as it may see fit to afford. Now, in defiance of this fundamental principle that the neutral government is always the judge of the conditions upon which the hospitality of its ports may be enjoyed by belligerent cruisers, it is proposed in these instructions that we, being belligerents, should gratuitously proceed beyond the requirements of public law and belligerent usage and establish for all our ships of war, certain additional restrictive conditions, within which only they shall use any neutral port. What assurance have we that any neutral government desires us now, or will desire us hereafter to take such action, restricting ourselves in her ports, in the exercise, outside of her limits, of our belligerent rights, either of search or of capture? Will any one neutral power — will Great Britain herself, at this time — give us assurance

that in any future war which may happen, it, being then neutral, will by municipal regulation, adopt the stringent terms of the proposed instructions, and make them an indispensable condition precedent to the use of all her ports by any belligerent cruiser? If not, then why should we, as belligerents, be expected now to put such a gratuitous disability upon all our cruisers, in all the neutral ports of the world? Is it not enough that our cruisers should in all neutral ports obey all the law, public and municipal, which they find in force there, and in case of its violation, by accident and against our fixed policy, afford, in the proper manner, through the judicial tribunals or otherwise, prompt and adequate reparation?

In the sixth place, it seems to follow from these views, that to instruct our cruisers, as above proposed, is no part of our business as belligerents? Therefore such action by us at this time would probably be to some neutral powers, and ought to be to all powers which are really and earnestly neutral, unwelcome. It behooves us then to consider upon what instance or urgency it is that we are to take this action, thus modifying our relations as they stand under the public law, to every neutral port, and to every ship claiming to be neutral, but being in fact engaged in illicit navigation or commerce. No one neutral power has any just ground to ask from us such wide-reaching action. There should be a neutral unanimity in the request if we are to grant it; and even then such unanimous request should be accompanied by stipulations of reciprocity of the rule in all future wars. Such conditions seem to be required in order to justify us in acceding to a proposition which goes to the curtailment of our rights in law as belligerents, at a moment when we have the most arduous blockade to enforce which any nation ever undertook to make effectual, and the most adventurous and persistent illicit trade to suppress, against which any nation ever attempted practically and not merely on paper, to guard.

It is true — and this idea appears to have occurred strongly to your mind — that the issuing of such instructions by us and obedience to them by our ships of war, would constitute no infraction of public law, because it is the unquestionable right of any government engaged in war to surrender such portions as it sees fit of its belligerent rights and privileges; and no other injury is, by such surrender, inflicted upon neutrals than that which

may be found in its manifest tendency to enfeeble and thus prolong the war. It should, however, be remarked that the second of these proposed instructions is in a direction and of a tendency opposed not only to the universal and traditional policy of belligerent governments, as expressed in their statutes, in the rulings of their prize courts and their instructions to cruisers, but also to what is often insisted upon, especially by neutrals in cases of capture, as a duty of captors. No adjudged case, it is believed, can be found in which the prize court, especially in Great Britain, has ever held that the captor erred in sending in with his prize too many of the officers, crew or passengers found on board at the time of her capture. Certainly no adjudged case can be found in which the right of the captor, thus to send in with his prize as many of the persons found on board of her as he may see fit to send, has been questioned. The allegation that any person found at the time of capture on board of any lawfully captured ship has any right, in law, immediately after the capture, to leave the ship against the will of the captor, or that the captor is bound in law to give his consent to such leaving, is believed to be wholly novel. It is undoubtedly true, in general, that the temptation and inclination of captors are to err in the other direction, and to retain too few rather than too many of the persons so captured. In so doing captors subject themselves to the frequent complaints and censures of the prize court, and not infrequently to its penalties. In fact to instruct a naval commander never to detain any neutral person found on board the captured neutral ship, unless such person be necessary as a witness; is to subject the commander to the harsh necessity of judging upon the spot in a case perhaps very complicated and important, just how many and what persons may be necessary as witnesses, with the certainty of being censured by his government for violation of his orders if he detain too many, and of being censured and perhaps mulcted by the prize court for insufficient performance of his duty if he detains too few. It is unnecessary to say that no principle or rule of international law places a lawfully commissioned, honest and faithful capturing officer in so critical a position. It is the clear belligerent right of his government to shield him, while lawfully engaged in his duties, from so severe and perilous a responsibility. Our gallant naval officers, it is therefore suggested, might justly feel that the public service in their hands and the public right

were cramped and weakened, and themselves embarrassed, if not aggrieved, by such an instruction.

In regard to the first of the proposed instructions, it is not deemed necessary to discuss elaborately, in this paper, the extent to which its terms augment and aggravate the restrictions which international law, particularly as expounded and applied by the highest authorities of Great Britain, both judicial and juridical, impose upon the conduct of commanders of public ships of war of a belligerent government lawfully sojourning within neutral ports. It is proper, however, to state that this important point has been maturely considered, and the leading British authorities examined and collated with care. Citations from these authorities, with brief comments upon them, will be found in the accompanying appendix.

Suffice it here to say that while these British authorities emphatically lay down the rule that no acts of war, either immediate or proximate, are permitted by the public law to belligerent vessels in waters within neutral jurisdiction; it is yet with the utmost reserve, circumspection and tenderness, that they enter upon or even approach the delicate question of the extent to which the belligerent cruiser, whether a public ship or a privateer duly commissioned and lawfully sojourning in neutral ports or waters, may, under international law, in the absence of municipal regulation to the contrary, avail itself in its act of departure, and after its departure from such places, of any facilities or remote and indirect aids lawfully obtained there, for the prosecution of its belligerent operations against the adverse belligerents, or for the exercise of its belligerent rights upon neutral ships outside the neutral jurisdiction. Of these facilities and indirect aids, lawfully obtainable by peaceable means, in the neutral ports and waters, *information* often is, and always may be, the most important. In the absence of municipal regulation to the contrary, such cruiser lawfully sojourning in the neutral port has a perfect right in public law, in order to obtain such information, to watch in a peaceable manner, most vigilantly, all vessels in the port, or coming into it or going out of it; and to dart out of the port just when he pleases, with the purpose to act upon such information in the exercise of his belligerent rights upon the high seas, outside of the neutral jurisdiction, upon all neutral commercial vessels, in the form of search and of capture, if such search shall discover

a probable case of navigation or trade, illicit as against his government. In so doing, such cruiser has but made an unforbidden passage over neutral territorial waters, in order to exercise in a lawful place his belligerent right. This under the public law, in the absence of municipal restraint, he has a perfect right to do.

If the Sovereign of the neutral port fails to prohibit such cruiser from using his port as a *station* for the *habitual* doing of these things — as distinguishable from a place of occasional visit and reasonable sojourn — then the adverse belligerent sovereign certainly, if the same privilege be refused to him and other neutral governments, perhaps, may with reason complain of the neutral sovereign's conduct, in allowing his port to be so used, as "noxious" and "unfriendly," and even perhaps unneutral. But they have no right in law to complain of the lawfully commissioned belligerent cruiser for availing himself of the liberty thus allowed him; and they are bound to consider that if the neutral sovereign does not prohibit the continuance of such practices — nor demand reparation for them — by such belligerent, then he intends to allow; and it is for this very reason that in such case they have sometimes charged him, and him only, with noxious and unfriendly conduct.

Such being the public law, it seems certain that the Naval vessels of the United States are not bound by that law, in the absence of municipal regulations, to govern for themselves their conduct as belligerents, by the proposed stringently restrictive instructions. This being the fact, if there were any one neutral government specially urging such instructions, and if it should happen that the subjects of such neutral government were, in its own ports and therefore under its own eyes, engaged in furnishing upon a large scale to the rebels, not only the munitions of war, but vessels, armament and even crews, for harassing and burning upon the high seas, our commercial ships, could it be considered our duty or our wise policy to issue, at the instance mainly of that power and in response to its almost exclusive complaint, such instructions so restricting our belligerent rights in our use of every neutral port? But the wisdom of your policy in restricting our Navy in the use of its belligerent rights within the most vigorous limits of established public law, is manifest, and is in conformity, not only with the judgment of your wisest

predecessors, but also with the traditional practice of the United States, and with their permanent interests, as appreciated by the great popular instinct of the present time. Indeed the *enlargement* of neutral immunities, in proper methods and by the common consent of nations, is an object worthy of your statesmanship, even in the present crisis. Especially is this the case when, as in this instance, you seek to combine with such liberal policy, a palpable proof to every government claiming to be neutral, of your desire to pursue toward it and toward all, to every proper and rightful extent, a course of conciliation.

In these views, it is respectfully suggested that, if you are urged by neutral governments to cause these instructions to be issued, the inquiry may properly be made of them, whether they, or any of them, are willing to adopt an identical rule of action in any future war, international or domestic, in which they may be engaged. In that event, the instructions proposed might, perhaps, upon the assurance to that effect, well receive your favorable consideration.

If a negative answer on the other hand should be given to such an inquiry, then it may be well to request any neutral government which presses this policy upon you, to produce from the records of its own practice as a belligerent any precedent of identical, or even similar instructions issued within the present century, to the commanders of its ships of war. Such precedents might doubtless have considerable weight in inducing you to adopt a policy in the same direction. Should no such precedent be forthcoming at your request, then it may be proper in response to any government, — the British Government for instance — which may especially desire that these proposed instructions should be issued, or that our belligerent rights as they exist under the public law should be further restrained by our own action, to request that any such restraining instructions which may have been within recent memory issued by such government, when a belligerent, to its naval officers, should now be furnished to you for your consideration. In such case it will be easy for the government of the United States to prove that it desires while maintaining its own belligerent rights not to be surpassed by any other government in a just and friendly respect for all the rights and lawful interests of neutrals.

APPENDIX

Embracing a synopsis of the leading British Authorities as to the first proposed Instruction.

The general rule of International Law, as received and expounded in the British Prize Courts, as to the restrictions and limitations imposed by it upon the lawfully commissioned belligerent cruiser, in the use of neutral ports or other waters, with a view to the prosecution outside of their limits, of his belligerent operations against the adverse belligerent, or the exercise of his belligerent rights on vessels claiming to be neutral, is summed up by Phillimore (citing his authorities) in the following terms: (Int. Law, Vol. 3, pp. 451–452)

"It has been already shown, in preceding portions (l.) of this "work, that it is not competent to a belligerent to exercise any "Rights of War within the territorial jurisdiction of a neutral "State (m.), and that this jurisdiction extends not only within "ports, headlands and bays, but to a recognized distance at "sea from the shore itself. Thus, captures made by armed "vessels stationed in a river of a Neutral Power, or in the "mouth of his river, or in his harbors, for the purpose of exer- "cising the Rights of War from that river or harbor, are in- "valid; and where a belligerent ship, lying within neutral ter- "ritory, made a capture with her boats, sent out of the neutral "territory, the capture was also held to be invalid; for though "the hostile force employed was applied to the captured vessel "lying out of the territory, yet no such use of a neutral terri- "tory for the purpose of war is to be permitted."(n.)

"All captures therefore made by belligerents within these "limits are, at the request of the Government of the Neutral "State, (o), pronounced by Courts of International Law, to be "invalid."

(n) "The Twee Gebroeders, 3 Robinson, p. 162, leading "English case. The Anna, 5 ib., p. 373. The Vrow Anna "Catharina, ib., p. 15, see the arguments of the counsel in "the Topaz, 2 Acton's Adm. Rep. p. 20."

The above statement of Phillimore, its brevity being considered, is very exact, but he does not introduce into it all the exceptions to its vigorous application which appears clearly in the

cases adjudicated by Lord Stowell, which he cites as his authority. It will be observed, however, that in order to bring his act within the rule of prohibition, as laid down by Phillimore, the lawfully commissioned belligerent cruiser must have his vessel *stationed* in the neutral water or harbor, and *stationed* there *for the purpose* of exercising the rights of war from that place. Now, neither this government nor its Naval Commanders have ever thought of infringing this rule, by so *stationing* its cruisers *for such purpose*. The importance of the distinction between the use made by the belligerent of a neutral port or water in the course of an *occasional visit or sojourn there*, and the use of the same place by him *as a station* from which *habitually* to exercise his rights of war, is emphatically set forth by Lord Stowell, in the case of the Anna Catharina (5 Robinson, p. 18) as follows: —

"If the fact had been that the privateer had made this cap-
"ture in a neutral port, or whilst lying in harbor, as was done
"in some of the ports of the North, *with a view of making that*
"*harbor an habitual station for captures*, I should have con-
"curred in reprobating such a practice in the strongest terms;
"but, if *whilst a privateer is accidently lying there*, she sees an
"enemy approaching, *she may go out and capture*, I conceive,
"without any violation of the peace or immunity of the neu-
"tral port, provided this is done beyond the limits of the port."

In the case of the Twee Gebroeders (3 Robinson, pp. 164–165) where the vessel lay within the neutral waters and sent her boats just outside of them to make the capture, Lord Stowell emphasized the same distinction, and said: —

"You are not to avail yourself of *a station* on neutral terri-
"tory, making as it were a vantage ground of the neutral coun-
"try, a country which is to carry itself with perfect equality
"between both belligerents, giving neither the one nor the
"other any advantage. Many instances have occurred in
"which *such an irregular use* of a neutral country has been
"warmly resented, and some during the present war: the prac-
"tice which has been tolerated in the Northern States of
"Europe, of permitting French privateers *to make stations of*
"*their ports*, and to sally out to capture British vessels in
"that neighborhood, is of that number."

In the same case he said: —

"I am of opinion that no use of neutral territory for the pur-

"poses of war is to be permitted. I do not say *remote uses*, such "as procuring provisions and refreshments, and *acts of that* "*nature*, which the law of nations *universally tolerates;* but that "no proximate acts of war are in any manner to *originate* on "neutral grounds; and I cannot but think that such an act as "this, that *a ship should station herself on neutral territory* and "send out her boats on hostile enterprises, is an *act of hostility* "much too immediate to be permitted."

Now, is it not here too evident, that if the belligerent cruiser may lawfully use the neutral port to get "provisions and refreshments," he may certainly use it to get information, and may not only in "appearance," but in "reality," "watch" carefully, in order to obtain information. Nor is the slightest information here given that the belligerent cruiser may not under public law, in the absence of municipal regulation to the contrary, take his departure from the neutral water just when he pleases, either following or accompanying any vessel which may see fit to sail out at the same time.

But this position is by no means left to mere inference. In another case of similar name, The Three [=Drie] Gebroeders (5 Rob. pp. 339 [*et seq.*]), Lord Stowell held, in *express terms*, that a capture was not vitiated by the capturing ship having passed through neutral territorial waters in order to accomplish the capture outside of the neutral limits. This is the very point. The belligerent cruiser may under public law, if unforbidden by municipal regulation, rightfully sail out of the neutral port in order to accomplish his capture in a lawful place.

Indeed, so well established is this right of departure at pleasure, unless municipally forbidden, either at the same time with or just after, even an *adverse belligerent*, and still more along with or just after a commercial vessel under a neutral flag, that Great Britain herself has held it to be necessary, in her general order in reference to her Bahama ports, to forbid, municipally, such departure by the belligerent cruiser, along with, or immediately after, a vessel of the adverse belligerent; but while making this stringent regulation, rendered necessary because there was in the public law as accepted by Great Britain, no such rule nor restriction, the British Government has wholly abstained from imposing in that municipal regulation any such restriction or rule in

relation to neutral vessels in their departure from the harbor, being accompanied, or immediately followed, by the belligerent cruiser.

It is useless to pursue the examination of this point farther. There are other cases in the British books, but they all speak with the same voice. The Prize Courts of Great Britain have never upon any occasion pretended to assert that under the Public Law, and in the absence of municipal regulation to the contrary, any lawfully commissioned belligerent cruiser occasionally visiting a neutral port and for a reasonable length of time sojourning there, may not in a peaceable manner watch any neutral commercial vessel there, and at his pleasure follow such vessel out of that port in order to do, upon the high seas, upon her any act which, at any time, may upon her be there lawfully done.

It is true that some of the Continental publicists, especially Hautefeuille, Galliani, Azuni and of course Hübner, — all avowedly impassioned champions of neutral rights, have in their speculations in their closets, as to what international law is, or in their judgment ought to be, gone farther. Lawrence has collected some of their *dicta* in this sense in his last edition of Wheaton, at page 767, and Lawrence's comments show that he leans too much in their direction. But their *dicta*, as cited by him, are not law, and by Prize Courts in Great Britain and the United States, at least, have never been received or applied as law. It is true that in our past history the United States has been almost as ardent a champion of the enlargement of neutral rights as Hautefeuille himself; but it must not be forgotten that our policy in that direction has always proceeded in the methods of attempted treaty stipulations, in order to change the harsh fixed rule, upon the basis of reciprocity. In the present case there is nothing either of such method or such basis. Our policy would, therefore, seem to be to maintain, undiminished, our belligerent rights as they stand in Public Law.

The quotation above given from Phillimore proves clearly that whenever any act is done by a lawfully commissioned belligerent cruiser, which infringes the right or immunity of a neutral port, no one in the Prize Court of any other nation can be lawfully even heard to make suggestions of such infringement, save only the neutral sovereign of the Port himself, through his agent authorized *ad hoc*.

It is also to be observed as a rule of Public Law too well settled to require either elucidation or citation of authority, that whosoever is injured in any manner, in a case of capture by a lawfully commissioned belligerent cruiser, who sends the prize vessel in for adjudication, is bound in law to seek in the proper manner his remedy in the Prize Court; and if he thinks that justice is not done him by such court of primary jurisdiction in the case, then he is bound in law to pursue and exhaust his judicial remedy by appeal, — and this under penalty of being held to acknowledge the justice of the sentence of the Court below, unless he does so appeal to the Appellate Court. And it is altogether irregular for him, or his Government, being neutral, in his behalf to make Diplomatic demand for reparation in his case, until his judicial remedy be thus exhausted; and this is confidently believed to be the inexorable judgment of the British Government, in relation to all such Diplomatic reclamations, when so prematurely addressed to itself as a belligerent.

As to the Second proposed Instruction.

Phillimore (Int. Law. Vol. 3, p. 602.) says:

"And indeed, in ordinary cases, the prize crew, whether na-
"tional, neutral or hostile, are necessary witnesses in the cause.
"(r.) And upon further proof ordered the attestation of the
"claimant and his clerks, and the correspondence between
"him and his agents, are admissible evidence and proper
"proofs of property." (s.)

(r.) The Henrick & Maria, 4 Rob. p. 43, (s.). The Adelaide, 3 Ad. p. 281. The Henrick & Maria, thus cited by Phillimore, was a neutral (Danish) vessel, captured by a British cruiser for alleged attempt to break blockade, — released by Lord Stowell, for want of previous knowledge or due notification. Incidentally came up the question, what persons the Court had a right to have within its reach, in the adjudication of such a case, and Lord Stowell said: —

"Prisoners are accessory witnesses to be examined; accord-
"ing to our instructions, they are the only witnesses. The
"French regulations admit the evidence of the captor, but
"hold at the same time that natural justice requires the crew
"of the captured vessel should be examined touching the
"rights in question."

La Purissima Conception[1] (5 Rob. p. 40) is still stronger. A neutral (Spanish) vessel captured with scarcely justifiable cause by a British privateer, who sent her in with her whole ship's company, 22 in number, all in irons. Released at once and captor mulcted in 100 pounds sterling for his cruelty in so confining the captured persons without showing to the Court that such rigor was necessary for his own security, or that of his prize. Stowell found no fault with him for bringing them all in, — assumed indeed that he had a right to do so, and to handcuff or otherwise confine so many of them as he could show to be needful for his security. The case therefore stands as full authority for the perfect right of the captor to send in with his prize, being under a neutral flag, all her ship's company.

It is needless to cite other cases to show on this point the rule of International Law, as expounded and applied in the Prize Courts of Great Britain.

It may be added, however, that in other passages of his work (see Vol. 3, p. 590) Phillimore speaks of the "captured crew," as in due course "brought in," and says that "the examination" must be confined to "persons on board at the time of the capture," unless otherwise ordered by the Court.

Upton, in the latest and fullest, and upon the whole, the most accurate Manual on Prize Law and Proceedings in the English language, which the Supreme Court in its latest judgment in prize cited as authority, lays down the settled rule of International Law upon this point, as established in the practice of our Prize Courts, in the following terms: —

> "The general rule in relation to the duty of captors towards "the persons captured on board the vessels taken, is to send "them in with the prize as witnesses in the proceedings in ad- "judication."

Indeed are we not ourselves fully committed to the doctrine that in the case of the "Trent" it was the right, under the public law as expounded by Great Britain, of Admiral Wilkes to capture that ship and send her in, with all on board, and that his omission, under the circumstances of the case, to do so, was an irregularity?

Commander Shufeldt called on me. Thinks the capture

[1] *Sic* Phillimore and Robinson.

of Charleston impracticable by the force now there. Says Dahlgren has been a good deal ill, and there has been much to discourage him. The Army, he says, fails to do justice to the Navy, without which they would be speedily driven away. There have been some mistakes, errors which seem to have caused irritation between the two branches of the service. Dahlgren has not spared himself, and his long and arduous labors have been such as would wear down a more robust man. More than exhausting physical labor have been the mental anxieties he has endured, — the loss of his two fleet captains, jealousies as to his professional advancement without corresponding sea service or naval achievement in battle, the morbid hostility of such of the Du Pont clique as remain in the squadron, army antagonism, and ignorance and prejudice fostered by it.

[*October* 6,] *Tuesday.* At Cabinet, Stanton absent. Some talk with Blair in relation to his speech last Saturday, in which he places himself in direct antagonism to Chase and Sumner. As we came out, Seward joined me and said he did not mean to commit himself on these questions and disputes till it was unavoidable. It does not displease him to have Chase and Blair at issue, but a remark of mine that we had better see wherein we agreed than where we disagreed pleased him and in a friendly way he complimented me as occupying a position more independent, philosophic, and patriotic than others.

[*October* 10,] *Saturday.* Lord Lyons, who returned last night, called on me to-day with Admiral Milne and staff, accompanied by Secretary Seward. Admiral Milne has a pleasant face, more Scotch than English. He is tall, — six feet two, — strongly built, not fleshy yet not spare, — a good physique in every respect. While we were conversing, Mr. Seward interrupted to say *he* had referred the Spanish claim of maritime jurisdiction to the King of Belgium. I asked whether the King of Belgium was an authority on inter-

national law and impowered to decide questions of this character so as to make them binding on others. His decision might be conclusive against Spain if he should adhere to the marine league, but were he to decide otherwise, his decision would conclude no government but the United States. I did not believe Great Britain would yield to the dictum of the King of Belgium against tradition and usage and the established law of nations, if the United States did. She would therefore approach Spanish territory to within three miles, while we, by this submission, would be excluded for six miles by the decree if against us.

Seward was a little nonplused. Both Lord Lyons and Admiral Milne exchanged significant looks at this singular reference, which jeopardized our rights and secured us nothing.

Dining at Lord Lyons's this evening, Admiral Milne, who sat next me, stated that he is the first British admiral who has visited New York since the government was established, certainly the first in forty years. He said that it had been the policy of his government to avoid such visitations, chiefly from apprehensions in regard to their crews, their language and general appearance being the same as ours. There were doubtless other reasons which neither of us cared to introduce. He was exceedingly attentive and pleasant. Said he had tried to preserve harmony and good feeling, and to prevent, as far as possible, irritation and vexatious questions between us. Complimented the energy we had displayed, the forbearance exercised, the comparatively few vexatious and conflicting questions which had arisen under the extraordinary condition of affairs, the management of the extensive blockade, and the general administration of our naval matters, which he had admired and in his way sustained without making himself a party in our conflict.

There were some twenty or twenty-five guests, including the Prussian, Spanish, and Brazilian Ministers, the Secretary of State, the Attorney-General, and myself of the

Cabinet. The whole was well-timed and judiciously got up for the occasion, and with a purpose. It is, I think, the harbinger of a better state of things, or rather of a change of policy by the English government.

Chase has gone to Ohio preparatory to the election, which takes place next Tuesday. Great interest is felt throughout the country in the result. Chase is understood to have special interest in this election.

October 12, *Monday.* At Seward's yesterday with Lord Lyons and Admiral Milne to dine. Miss Cushman, the actress, who is visiting at Seward's, was present. I took her to dinner.

The city is full of rumors of fighting, and of Meade's falling back. Much is probably trash for the Pennsylvania and Ohio elections, which take place to-morrow. Still I am prepared for almost any news but good news from the front. Cannot expect very good news from Meade's command. He would obey orders and faithfully carry out the plans of a superior mind, but there is no one here more capable than himself, to plan, to advise, to consult. It will not surprise me if he is outgeneraled by Lee.

October 13, *Tuesday.* No news from the front. President read this noon a dispatch from Meade, written last night, in which he says if the Rebels do not attack him to-day, he will attack them. I doubt it. He cannot do much on the offensive except under orders. As second in command or in any capacity under an intelligent superior, I think Meade would do well. He will never have another such opportunity to do the Rebels harm as when he supinely let Lee and his army cross the Potomac and escape unmolested.

The elections in Ohio and Pennsylvania absorb attention. The President says he feels nervous. No doubts have troubled me. An electioneering letter of McClellan in favor of Woodward for Governor of Pennsylvania, written yes-

terday, is published. It surprises me that one so cautious and intelligent as McC. should have been so indiscreet and unwise. The letter can do him no good, nor can it aid Woodward, who is a party secessionist. It is a great mistake, and must have been extorted from McClellan by injudicious partisan friends, under the mistaken idea that his personal influence might control the election. What errors prevail in regard to personal influence among party men! A good and wise man can do but little on the day of election, particularly in a bad cause. He can often aid in a good one by confirming the rightminded who are timid and may hesitate and doubt. McClellan lost balance when he wrote this letter.

Preston King spent the evening with me. Young Ulric Dahlgren called. The gallant fellow lost a leg at Gettysburg and is just recovering, so that he gets around on crutches. It is the first of his calls, and King was wonderfully interested in him — affected to tears — and listened to his modest accounts with the earnestness of a child.

October 14, *Wednesday*. The election returns from Pennsylvania and Ohio are cheering in their results. The loyal and patriotic sentiment is strongly in the ascendant in both States, and the defeat of Vallandigham is emphatic. I stopped in to see and congratulate the President, who is in good spirits and greatly relieved from the depression of yesterday. He told me he had more anxiety in regard to the election results of yesterday than he had in 1860 when he was chosen. He could not, he said, have believed four years ago, that one genuine American would, or could be induced to, vote for such a man as Vallandigham, yet he has been made the candidate of a large party, their representative man, and has received a vote that is a discredit to the country. The President showed a good deal of emotion as he dwelt on this subject, and his regrets were sincere.

October 15, *Thursday*. News from the front vague and

unsatisfactory. Our papers dwell on the masterly movements of Meade, and street rumor glorifies him, but I can get nothing to authenticate or justify this claim of wonderful strategy. Lee has made a demonstration, and our army has fallen back, — "changed its base," they call it at the War Department; in the vernacular, *retreated*. This retreat may have been, and probably was, skillfully executed. It is well to make the most of it. It is claimed Meade has shown great tact in not permitting the enemy to outflank him. Perhaps so. I shall not controvert, if I doubt it. I would not decry our generals, nor speak my mind freely if unfavorably impressed concerning them, in public. Meade does the best he knows how; Halleck does nothing.

The election returns come in triumphantly for the Union. Woodward and Vallandigham, both Rebel sympathizers, have been defeated. General McClellan, whose reticence and caution have hitherto been well maintained, unwisely exposed himself. I am informed he refused to write a letter until assured by those in whom he had full trust that there was no doubt of Woodward's election. I doubt if his letter helped Woodward to one vote, but it has effectually killed McClellan.

October 16, *Friday*. The President read to the Cabinet his letter to the Missouri radicals, and also a letter to General Schofield. Both exhibit tact, shrewdness, and good sense, on a difficult and troublesome subject. There is no cause for dissension among the friends of the Administration in Missouri, and the President does not commit himself to either faction in this controversy, but, like some of us, has little respect for the wild vagaries of the radical portion.

The President also read a confidential dispatch to General Meade, urging him not to lose the opportunity to bring on a battle, assuring him that all the honors of a victory should be exclusively his (Meade's), while in case of a defeat he (the President) would take the entire responsi-

bility. This is tasking Meade beyond his ability. If the President could tell him how and when to fight, his orders would be faithfully carried out, but the President is overtasking Meade's capability and powers. Where is Halleck, General-in-Chief, who should, if he has the capacity, attend to these things, and if he has not should be got out of the way.

October 20, *Tuesday*. Busy when out of the Department in collecting materials and framing the skeleton outlines of my Annual Report. Shall be so occupied for a few weeks to the neglect of my journal, which usually consumes a late evening hour, after company has gone and other labors of the day are laid aside. But the details of an annual report require personal labor and investigation which I cannot delegate to another without revision and my own examination. This takes all my time and really overtaxes me, with current duties.

There was little of interest to-day at the Cabinet. Seward, Chase, and Stanton were absent. Stanton, I am told, has gone to Tennessee.

Lee with his army has disappeared from the front. It is reported that he has torn up the rails and destroyed the bridges as he has disappeared. Meade, we are told, is in pursuit, and the press and others give him great credit for strategy; that is, he knows not what to do, and the papers and correspondents don't know that fact, — this is strategy. He will not overtake Lee if he wants to.

I met General Sickles at the President's to-day. When I went in, the President was asking if Hancock did not select the battle-ground at Gettysburg. Sickles said he did not, but that General Howard and perhaps himself, were more entitled to that credit than any others. He then detailed particulars, making himself, however, much more conspicuous than Howard, who was really used as a set-off. The narrative was, in effect, that General Howard had taken possession of the heights and occupied the Cemetery on

Wednesday, the 1st. He, Sickles, arrived later, between five and six P.M., and liked the position. General Meade arrived on the ground soon after, and was for abandoning the position and falling back. A council was called; Meade was earnest; Sickles left, but wrote Meade his decided opinion in favor of maintaining the position, which was finally agreed to against Meade's judgment.

Allowance must always be made for Sickles when he is interested, but his representations confirm my impressions of Meade, who means well, and, in his true position, that of a secondary commander, is more of a man than Sickles represents him, — can obey orders and carry out orders better than he can originate and give them, hesitates, defers to others, has not strength, will, and self-reliance. My impressions in regard to the late movement by Lee in front are strengthened. Meade's falling back was a weakness. The movement on the part of Lee was a feint to cover his design of sending off troops to some other point, — I think Chattanooga, — where the Rebels are concentrating and the information received to-day that he is destroying the roads as he retreats confirms my opinion. We shall soon learn whether this *strategy* is Meade's or Lee's. It is now asserted that Meade retreated before one division of Lee's army. This is probably a caricature rumor, and yet perhaps not much exaggeration. Others do not listen to my conjecture that more troops have gone to Chattanooga, yet it is strongly impressed upon me. The Rebels can't afford to be defeated there. Jeff Davis has gone there, and there they must make a stand.

October 21, *Wednesday*. A telegram from Admiral Porter says the Tennessee is rising, and he will send convoy for transports, etc. General Halleck is quite anxious. When I questioned him about Meade, he said it was "the same old story we had from all our Potomac generals."

October 22, *Thursday*. Went this afternoon by invitation

of General Barnard to visit Fort Foote, just completed, some eight miles below the city. A pleasant party, — Chase, Generals Barnard, Augur, Barry, Admiral Davis, etc., with ladies. It is a strong position and a vast amount of labor has been expended, — uselessly expended. In going over the works a melancholy feeling came over me, that there should have been so much waste, for the fort is not wanted, will never fire a hostile gun. No hostile fleet will ever ascend the Potomac.

October 23, *Friday*. Only a portion of the Cabinet present and but little done. The Missouri difficulty discussed, etc.

Late this afternoon the Secretary of State made me a formal visit and introduced Mr. Bruzual, who comes to this country as Minister Extraordinary from Venezuela, and the Secretary of the Legation. Mr. Seward proceeded to say that the disturbances in Venezuela prevented our Government from recognizing Mr. B. for the present, but that he would soon be accredited. In the mean time he wishes to purchase a naval vessel for the use of his government. Mr. Seward said Venezuela was at peace with all the world, the purchase therefore would be proper and did not, in any way, compromise our Government, and he wished me to give Mr. B. a letter to Commodore Stribling at the Philadelphia Navy Yard to assist him, or to designate an officer who would. I made a suggestion or two in regard to the propriety of this proceeding, but Mr. Seward, who had to dispose of his as yet unaccredited minister, who is to receive official assistance, said it was all correct, perfectly proper, wrote me the address desired, that there should be no recognition or mention of Mr. B. as minister.

October 24, *Saturday*. General Terry and Colonel Hawley from Morris Island, before Charleston, called on me. Both are prejudiced against Dahlgren, and the two are acting in concert. They come from Gillmore and have a mission to perform, which they at once proceeded to exe-

cute by denouncing Dahlgren as incompetent, imbecile, and insane. They represent him to be totally unfit for his position, and have many severe censures, some of which I think are unmerited and undeserved. They submit the correspondence between Gillmore and Dahlgren. I am satisfied they are, at least in some respects, in error, and Dahlgren has been feeble from illness. He is proud and very sensitive and the strictures of the press he would feel keenly. Those of his subordinates who belonged to the Du Pont clique do not love him, nor do some of his professional brethren become reconciled to his advancement. His honors, as I anticipated they would, beget disaffection and have brought him many unpleasant responsibilities. His cold, selfish, and ambitious nature has been wounded, but he is neither a fool nor insane as those military gentlemen represent and believe. Both Dahlgren and Gillmore are out of place; they are both intelligent, but they can better acquit themselves as ordnance officers than in active command.

After maturely considering the subject of the proposed purchase of a naval vessel by the Venezuelan Government or the unaccredited Minister, I wrote Mr. Seward my doubts, informed him that the whole responsibility must rest with him, and inclosed a letter to Stribling, stating it was written at the special request of the Secretary of State, which letter he may or may not use.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
24 October, 1863.

SIR,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd instant, enclosing a translation of a note addressed to you by Mr. Bruzual, in which he speaks of an intention of buying a steamer in this country for the government of Venezuela, of which he is the representative, and in connection with which you ask if I am aware of any objection to the arming of the steamer in the manner indicated in Mr. Bruzual's dispatch.

I am not sufficiently informed of the condition of affairs in

Venezuela to express an opinion upon the subject of your inquiry. The subject is one of extreme delicacy, and should, and I doubt not will, be duly considered by the Department of State, especially in view of occurrences transpiring abroad affecting our own country.

Herewith, I have the honor to transmit a letter to Comm° Stribling, conformably to the request made in our personal interview last evening. The request of Mr. Bruzual appears to be, under the circumstances, one of extraordinary and unusual character, and such as, had the application been made by that gentleman to this Department, would not have been granted. He is not, it seems, accredited, by reason of the unsettled condition of affairs in Venezuela, and yet it is proposed he shall have extended to him the unusual favor of a public officer in obtaining an armed vessel.

Excuse me for suggesting doubts as to the policy of this step, but they are such that I have declined the responsibility, and placed the letter exclusively on your request, so that you can present or withhold it, as in your judgment, with a full knowledge of the facts and my doubts, may seem best.

Very respectfully,
GIDEON WELLES,
Secty. of Navy.

HON. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secty of State.

October 31, *Saturday.* My time has been so occupied that I was unable to note down daily current events, which, however, have not been of special importance. It has been my practice to make a minute of transactions on the day they occurred, usually after my family had retired for the night, but for some days I have been occupied until near midnight with matters that cannot be dispensed with. I was getting materials and preparing the outlines for my Annual Report, when I received a communication from Du Pont, deliberately prepared, and with evident malicious intent, at his home "near Wilmington," complaining of "harsh language," "wounding words," and "injurious imputations" in my letters and dispatches relative to his

failure on the 7th of April. I am conscious of no such wrong as he attributes to me. Though grieved and disappointed in what took place, I felt no resentment, expressed none, to call out such denunciations, nor could he have had any such opinion in the day and time of those occurrences, as he would then have made his complaint. But the correspondence closed last June; he has been for months in Delaware, nursing discontent and chafing under disappointed ambition. His mind, as Drayton reports, has become morbid. He was for a time the great naval hero, but Farragut has eclipsed him. He has seen Farragut toasted and complimented, dined and extolled by our countrymen and by foreigners, until his envy and vexation could no longer be repressed. He therefore reviews the past, and, too proud to acknowledge or admit errors, faults, or infirmities, he assails me, who have been his friend, and declares he must again place on the files of the Department his indignant refutation of my charges. He specifies no charges, quotes no language, mentions no exceptional remark. I have treated him gently, for I respect his acquirements, though I dislike his intrigues. He doubtless thought I should refuse to receive and place on file his unjust complaint, and I at first hesitated whether to do so.

Du Pont has ability, pride, and intrigue, but he has not the great essentials of a naval commander, — heroic valor, unselfish energy, and devotion to the country. Thinks of himself more than of the country and the service. No more accomplished officer could command our European Squadron, but he is not made for such terrific encounters as that of Farragut at Mobile and New Orleans, and as are necessary to resist Sumter and capture Charleston. He has too much pride to be a coward, — would sooner die than show the white feather, — but the innate, fearless moral courage of Farragut or John Rodgers is not his. He feels his infirmity, and knows that I perceive it. But it is a weakness for which I did not reproach him, or use harsh language. I pitied him.

In this communication art and literary skill, on which he prides himself, are exhibited, but not true wisdom. He tries to be impudent, and, wishing to give offense, thereby lessens his dignity. Were I to return his jeremiad, it would be published, and his grief would excite sympathy. I must, therefore, in justice to myself, to him, and to truth reply. I have no doubt he has skillful advisers. H. Winter Davis, one of the most talented and ingenious men in Congress, has been his friend and adviser, and is, if I am not mistaken, his counselor now.

XIV

The Writing of the Secretary's Annual Report — The Russian Fleets sent into American Waters for the Winter — Entertaining the Russian Officers — Colfax elected Speaker of the House over Washburne — Senatorial Opposition to John P. Hale as Chairman of the Naval Committee — Brandegee's Appointment to the House Naval Committee — Plain Speech with Senator Hale — Insubordination of Commodore Wilkes — Rebel Letters captured on board the Ceres — The Plot of Trowbridge, Briggs, Lamar, and Cavnach — Louis Napoleon's Attitude — The Turret Vessels gaining Friends — The Department's Policy in regard to Ships — Conversation with Senator Doolittle on Trade-Permits and Presidential Candidates — Sailors enticed into the Army — The Year closes more satisfactorily than it began.

December, 1863. It has been some weeks since I have opened this book. Such time as I could spare from exacting and oppressing current duties at the Department has been devoted to gathering and arranging materials for, and in writing, my Annual Report. Most of this latter labor has been done in the evening, when I was fatigued and exhausted, yet extending often to midnight. Likely the document itself will in style and manner show something of the condition of the author's mind. In examining, analyzing, and weighing matters, I have sometimes felt discouraged and doubted my ability to do equal and exact justice to all, injustice to none. Every statement and sentence will be scrutinized, criticized, and scanned; politicians, naval men, legislators, statesmen at home and abroad will in this period of war and controversy study what may be said, with a zeal and purpose beyond what is usual. My wish is to do wrong to no one, to present the facts correctly and to serve my country honestly. The two or three friends to whom I have submitted the paper speak encouragingly of it. Mr. Faxon has been most useful to me and assisted me most. Mr. Fox and Mr. Lenthall have made sensible suggestions. I have found Mr. Eames a good critic, and he

twice went over the whole with me. When finally printed and I sent off my last proof, I felt relieved and better satisfied with the document than I feared I should be. There is a responsibility and accountability in this class of papers, when faithfully done, vastly greater and more trying than in ordinary authorship. I believe I can substantiate everything I have said to any tribunal, and have omitted nothing which the Congress or the country ought to know. I do not expect, however, to silence the captious, or those who choose to occupy an attitude of hostility. If what I have said shall lead the government to better action or conclusions in any respect, I shall be more than satisfied.

The President requested that each head of Department would prepare a few paragraphs relating to his Department which might, with such modifications as he chose to make, be incorporated into the message. Blair and myself submitted ours first, each about three weeks since; the others were later.

I was invited and strongly urged by the President to attend the ceremonials at Gettysburg, but was compelled to decline, for I could not spare the time. The President returned ill and in a few days it was ascertained he had the varioloid. We were in Cabinet-meeting when he informed us that the physicians had the preceding evening ascertained and pronounced the nature of his complaint. It was in a light form, but yet held on longer than was expected. He would have avoided an interview, but wished to submit and have our views of the message. All were satisfied, and that portion which is his own displays sagacity and wisdom.

The Russian government has thought proper to send its fleets into American waters for the winter. A number of their vessels arrived on the Atlantic seaboard some weeks since, and others in the Pacific have reached San Francisco. It is a politic movement for both Russians and Americans, and somewhat annoying to France and England. I have directed our naval officers to show them all proper cour-

tesy, and the municipal authorities in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia have exhibited the right spirit. Several of the Russian ships arrived and ascended the Potomac about the 1st instant.

On Saturday, the 5th instant, the Admiral and his staff made me an official visit, and on Monday, the 7th, the Secretary of State and myself with Mr. Usher returned the visit. Taking a steamboat at the navy yard, we proceeded down to the anchorage near Alexandria, where we were received with salutes and dined with the officers. On Monday dined with Baron Stoeckel and the Russian officers at Seward's. Tuesday we were entertained at Stoeckel's. On Wednesday, the 9th, received and entertained fifty Russian officers, the Cabinet, foreign ministers, and the officers of our own Navy who were in Washington, and all professed to be, and I think were, gratified. It was a question whether some of the legations would attend, but I believe all were present at our party.

Mr. Colfax was elected Speaker, and the House was organized without difficulty. There was an attempt to elect some one else, but it was an abortion. Washburne of Illinois wanted the place, but found few supporters and finally gave up the effort. Blair, to my surprise, went for Washburne, who, though the oldest, is confessedly the meanest man in Congress. Colfax is exceedingly sore over the course of Blair, who, he says, advised him not to compete with Grow, and now, when the field is open and fairly his, goes for W., whom he (C.) knows B. does not like. I not only preferred Colfax, but did not conceal my contempt for Washburne, whose honesty and veracity I know to be worse than indifferent. Blair tells me his opinion of W. is pretty much the same as mine and that he suggested and spoke of him at the instigation of the President, who, while he has not a very high opinion of Washburne, wants confidence in Colfax, whom he considers a little intriguer, — plausible, aspiring beyond his capacity, and not trustworthy.

In the appointment of committees, Colfax avows a desire to do justice to the Departments, which Grow did not in all cases, but placed some men on the Department committees that were positively bad. In no instance did he consult me. There is a practice by some Secretaries, I understand, to call upon the Speaker and influence his selections. The practice is, I think, wrong, yet courtesy and propriety would lead a fair-minded Speaker to appoint fair committees and consult the Departments and not put upon committees any of the class mentioned, objectionable characters who would embarrass the Secretary or be indifferent to their own duties. The conduct of Colfax is, so far as I am concerned, in pleasant contrast with Grow. Not that I do not appreciate Grow, nor that I am not on friendly terms with him. But C. has called and consulted with me, which G. never did. I neither then nor now undertook to select or name individual members, as I know has been done by others. Colfax named or showed me a list of names from which he proposed to make up the Naval Committee. He says Schenck intimates he would like to be chairman, — that when, in Congress twenty years ago, he was on the Naval Committee, the duties were pleasant and familiar to him. There are, however, family rather than public reasons which now influence him. If on the Naval Committee he would expect to legislate and procure favor for his brother. The Schenck family is grasping and pugnacious. I objected to him, and also to H. Winter Davis, who is Du Pont's adviser, and who is disappointed because he was not made Secretary of the Navy.

In the Senate there is a singular state of things, I hear. Their proceedings are secret, but I am informed the Senators are unanimously opposed to placing John P. Hale on the Naval Committee, where he has been Chairman, but persistently hostile to the Department. The sentiments of Senators, I am told, confounded Hale, who alternately blusters and begs. Some, very likely a majority, want the moral courage to maintain and carry out their honest con-

victions, for there is not a Senator of any party who does not know he is a nuisance and discredit to the Naval Committee, and that he studies to thwart and embarrass the Department and never tries to aid it. This movement against Hale is spontaneous in the Senate. It certainly has not been prompted by me, for though he is the organ of communication between the Department and the Senate, I have ceased to regard him with respect, and have been silent respecting him. The Senators have failed to pay attention to him, and do well in getting rid of him, if they succeed in resisting his importunities, which, I hear, are very persistent.

. . . The Senators have, in their secret meetings, let [Hale] know their opinion of him, — that their confidence in him has gone. Should they continue him as Chairman of the Naval Committee, he will have no influence, and his fall, which must eventually take place, will be greater. . . .

The interference of Members of Congress in the organization of the navy yards and the employment of workmen is annoying beyond conception. In scarcely a single instance is the public good consulted in their interference, but a demoralized, debauched system of personal and party favoritism has grown up which is pernicious. No person representing a district in which there is a navy yard, ought ever to be placed on the Naval Committee, nor should a Member of Congress meddle with appointments unless requested by the Executive. It is a terrible and increasing evil.

A strange sale of refuse copper took place in September at the Washington Navy Yard. I have had the subject investigated, but the board which I appointed was not thorough in its labors, and did not pursue the subject closely. But the exhibit was such that I have dismissed the Commandant of the Yard, the Naval Storekeeper, and two of the masters, who are implicated, yet I am by no means certain I have reached all, or the worst.

December 12, *Saturday*. To-day the Members of Congress very generally visited the Russian fleet. I did not go down, but detailed two steamers which were at the yard to convey the members. Our Russian friends are rendering us a great service.

Senator Sumner called, and we had half an hour's interesting conversation on the topics of the day and times. He compliments my Report. Senator Morgan also called. Says the nominating committee will, he thinks, nominate Hale Chairman of the Naval Committee, though reluctantly; no one wants him. Says Hale tendered him the appointment, but he knew not Hale's power to bestow it. That wretched Senator knows not the estimation in which he is held by his associates, and I can perceive by this attempted manœuvre with Morgan that he supposes Morgan and myself have been conspiring against him, whereas the truth is we have never exchanged a word concerning him, nor have I attempted to influence a single Senator.

December 14, *Monday*. Yesterday was warm and balmy as a day in June. Business so crowded to-day that I was unable to clear my table, which is unusual, for I make it a point to dispose of all current business daily, though to accomplish it I am sometimes unable to get away until late. Had many calls from Members of Congress. The Committees of the two houses are announced. Hale is Chairman of the Senate Naval Committee. In the House, Brandegee of New London is substituted for English. This exchange is not a good one, is made in bad faith, and, after two distinct interviews with Mr. Colfax, without consulting or apprising me. Brandegee's name was not on the list which Colfax showed me, nor was it mentioned in either of our interviews; on the contrary we had an explicit understanding that the New England Members on the committee would be retained. The President has, I see, a right appreciation of Colfax, but in this instance there is an intrigue lying behind it.

December 15, *Tuesday*. Seward and Chase were not present at the Cabinet-meeting. The President was well and in fine spirits.

Mr. John P. Hale called this afternoon, much excited; said there was something in the *New York Herald* respecting him and myself which he was told came from the Department. I asked if he meant to say the statement, which I had not seen, whatever it was, originated with me. He answered no, emphatically no, for he considered me a gentleman, and had always experienced gentlemanly treatment from me; but he could not say as much of Fox, whom he denounced as coarse, impudent, and assuming, — constantly trespassing on my unsuspicious nature. Told me of incidents and intrigues which he had personally witnessed; alluded to Grimes, who, he said, favored Fox, and Fox favored Grimes; both were conspiring against me. For me, he declared he entertained high respect. He said that we may have sometimes differed, but it was an honest difference; that he had never opposed my administration of the Department, etc., etc. I listened to his eulogies calmly, and told him frankly I was not aware he had ever favored me or the Department, during the long and severe struggle we had experienced; that in this unparalleled war we had received no aid or kind word from him, though he was in a position above all others from which we might reasonably have expected it; that from no man in Congress had we received more hostility than from him. I reminded him how I had invited him to my confidence and assistance in anticipation of the extra session of 1861, and of the manner in which my warm, cordial, sincere invitation had been met; that I had, without reserve, and in honest zeal laid open to him our whole case, — all our difficulties; that I was grieved because he had not responded to my invitation and repaired to Washington as the chairmen of the committees of the other Departments had done; that my friendly greetings had been slighted or designedly treated with indifference; that in that great crisis he de-

clined to enter into any examination of affairs, declined to prepare, or to assist in preparing, necessary laws, or to inform himself, or to consult respecting estimates; but that, as soon as the Senate met, and before any communication was received from the President, he, the Chairman of the Naval Committee, hastened to introduce a resolution, the first of the extra session, directing the Secretary of the Navy to communicate a statement of all contracts made from the day I entered upon my duties, whether they were legal, what prices I had paid, how the purchases compared with former purchases, and a variety of detail, all of which I had proposed to give him, that he should have it in his power to explain to the Senate and defend the Department from virulent violent assault; that I had invited him to come to Washington, as other Senators had come on a like request from the heads of Departments with which they were connected, but he did not come; that when he did arrive, I requested him to examine the records and papers, and all my acts, which he neglected to do; and that it was plain to me and to all others that his purpose in introducing that resolution, the first business movement of the session, was to cast suspicion on my acts, and to excite prejudice against me. He did not succeed in doing me serious injury, though he was an old Senator, and I a new Secretary, — though I had a right, in my great trials, to expect that he, the Chairman of the Naval Committee, would take me by the hand instead of striking a blow in my face. The hostility manifested and the malignity of that resolution were so obvious that it reacted. It was my belief that from the time he aimed that blow he had fallen in public estimation. I knew the President and many Senators had thought less of him. For myself I had never, from that day, expected, nor had I received, any aid or a word of encouragement from him. Neither the Department nor the Navy, in this arduous and terrific war, had been in any way benefited by him, but each had experienced indifference and hostility. Occupying the official relations which we did to each other, I had a

right to have expected friendly, cordial treatment, but it had been the reverse. If the Department and the Navy had been successful, he had not in the least contributed to that success and his opposition had been ungenerous and without cause.

He listened with some surprise to my remarks, for I had always submitted to his injustice without complaint, had always treated him courteously if not familiarly, and forborne through trying years any harsh expression or exhibition of resentment or wounded feelings. My frank arraignment was, therefore, unexpected. He had, I think, come to me with an expectation that we would lock hands, for a time at least, and go forward together. He spoke of having differed on the matter of the Morgan purchases, but said it was an honest difference. I asked wherein we had differed, what there was wrong in those purchases, whether there had been through the whole war, in the expenditure of hundreds of millions, any transactions so favorable to the country? He declared he had never imputed any wrong to me; that he considered Morgan sharp and as having received a great compensation for the services performed; that he differed with me in my arrangement to pay commission instead of a salary; thought I could have employed naval officers or a competent merchant to have done the services. I requested him to name to me the man who could have done that service better or as well, or to mention a single instance where the government in any Department had done as well or been as successful. The War Department had made extensive contracts for vessels at exorbitant prices; their commissions were never less, but generally, I thought always, higher, than I paid Morgan, and the rates paid by them for vessels were from twenty-five to fifty per cent higher than I paid; yet neither he nor any one else had taken exceptions to those war purchases. I assured him such was the fact, and defied him to show the contrary; that no transactions of a pecuniary nature with the government by any Department had been so well

and so advantageously managed for the government as this for which he had labored to bring censure upon me; that, had he come to the Department and informed himself, he could not have made the statements he did, then and other times, but that he, the Chairman, the organ of the Department, had seldom darkened our doors, and never on any important public measure. He had preferred to assail and denounce us in the Senate and to compliment the War Department, which had been grossly extravagant in its contracts and its purchases.

As regarded Mr. Grimes and Mr. Fox, my feelings towards them were different from his. They were my friends, and I was glad of it. They were, I was rejoiced to say, earnest and sincere in their labors for the government and the country. The people were under great obligations to both. I assured him that I intended no one should so strike, or stir up enmities, between them and me. Mr. Fox was a valuable assistant, and if, from any cause, we were to lose him, it would be difficult to supply his place in some respects. Hale said it would not be at all difficult; repeated that Fox was insolent, coarse, and repulsive, unfit for his position, made the Department unpopular. Says Fox told him last fall it was his, Hale's, duty to communicate the views of the Department to the Senate and defend them. I suggested that this was probably stronger than the case perhaps warranted, that he probably stated the Navy Department relied on him, as other Departments did on their respective Chairmen, to inform himself and state the views, purpose, and object of the Department in regard to any measure pertaining to our service. I told him that I certainly thought we were entitled to that comity, unless the Chairman was opposed, and even then a fair statement might be expected, but that he had never spoken for the Department, never came near it, never possessed himself of the facts; that it appeared to me he, having been trained and practiced in opposition, preferred to criticize and oppose, rather than support the measures of the Admin-

istration. Fox, being faithful and a strict disciplinarian, could not believe it possible that any sincere friend of the Administration and of the Navy could, without cause, persistently oppose both.

December 18, *Friday*. Had a letter from Commodore Wilkes Monday evening, complaining that injustice was done him in my Annual Report. The letter was studiously impudent and characteristic, was untruthful in some respects, and unofficerlike generally. He requested it should be sent to Congress with his correspondence. I replied that such proceeding would be improper, and that it would not, of course, be complied with.

I understand that before my reply left the Department he had furnished copies of his letter to me to the newspapers, which he knows is in violation of regulations as well as of decorum. He had, I see, prepared his letter with great care, while my reply was offhand and hasty. I find his letter in the *New York Times* and *Philadelphia Inquirer*. This discourtesy and repeated violation of regulations will necessitate a court martial with a troublesome man of a good deal of ability, of great leisure, and who is not delicate as regards means. Naval officers of experience have warned me that orders and favors to Wilkes would result in this, — that he is regardless of orders to himself, but tyrannical and exacting to others.

A charge of bribery against a Senator has resulted in John P. Hale's admission that he is the man referred to, acknowledging that he took the money, but that it was a *fee* not as a *bribe*. "Strange such a difference there should be twixt tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee." This loud-mouthed paragon, whose boisterous professions of purity, and whose immense indignation against a corrupt world were so great that he delighted to misrepresent and belie them in order that his virtuous light might shine distinctly, is beginning to be exposed and rightly understood. But the whole is not told and never will be; he is a mass of corruption.

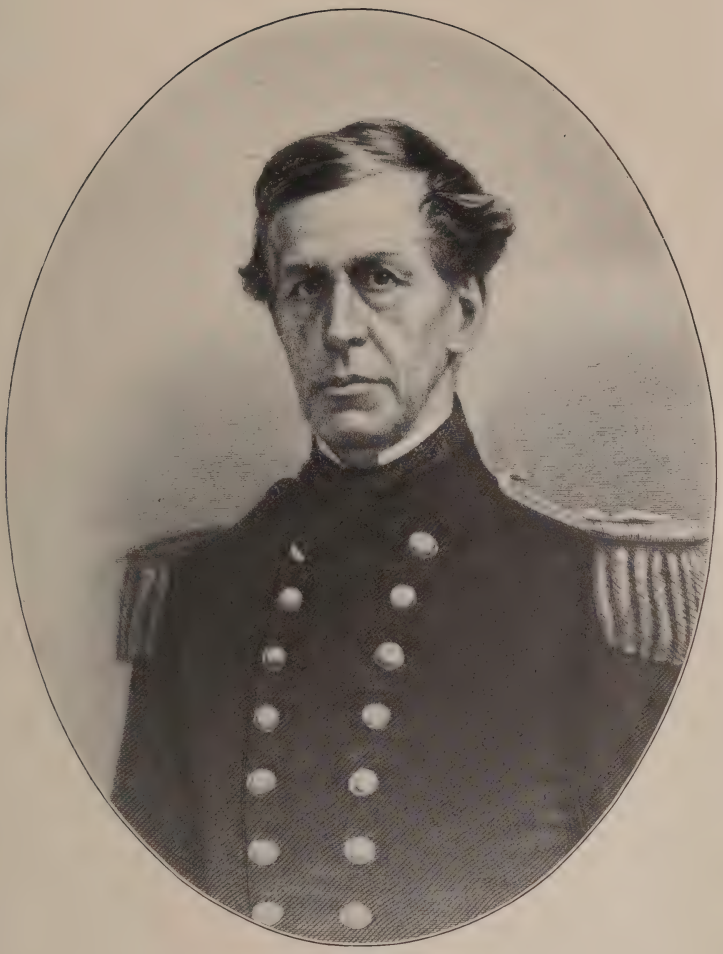
The steamer Chesapeake, seized by Rebel pirate mutineers, has been captured at Sambro, some twenty miles from Halifax. I was informed by telegram last night. Immediately sent word that she must be delivered over to the Colonial authorities, she having been captured in British waters. This order was sent within ten minutes after the telegram was received, the messenger who brought it waiting for the reply.

December 19, *Saturday*. There was a reception to-day from one to three at the President's. Went over for an hour. Several of the Cabinet, most of the foreign ministers, judges of the Supreme Court, and a gay assemblage of ladies, with some of the Russian officers, were present.

Told Grimes he must remain on the Naval Committee; that the country required it; that we could not dispense with his services. He says he cannot serve under a chairman whom he knows to be corrupt, indolent, faithless, worthless. He spoke of Hale in most disparaging terms as an unfit associate of honorable men, selfish and wicked, wholly regardless of the Navy or country. There is not, he says, a man in the Senate that does not know him to be an improper person to be on the committee, yet they had not the courage to do their duty and leave him off, — in other words cannot resist his appeals to be kept in the position in order to aid him in a reëlection.

Sent a letter to Wilkes this afternoon inquiring if he procured, assented to, or knew of, the publication of his letter of the 11th inst. He coolly returns a negative, which does not surprise me, though palpably untrue. I am prepared to receive any affirmation of a falsehood or denial of a truth from him, provided his personal interest can be thereby subserved. His letter of the 11th is equivocal and in some respects untrue.

Had a call from Senator Trumbull, who feels that the Senate ought not to continue Hale in the chairmanship of the Naval Committee, but says the Department will not



CHARLES WILKES

suffer in consequence, for Hale is well understood, and I must have seen that the Senators as against him always sustain the Department. Fessenden also called with similar remarks and views. I avoided the expression of any opinion, or wish, as to the construction of the committee. If the question were open and I was consulted, I should not hesitate to give my views, but I do not care to be intrusive, to interfere with or complain of what the Senate does, or has done, in these matters. Senator Fessenden wants a portion of the prizes should be sent to Portland. Told him of difficulties. Portsmouth, Providence, New Haven, New Jersey have made similar applications. Whatever pecuniary benefit there might be to a few individuals in each locality, the true interest of the country could not be promoted by such an arrangement. Attorneys, marshals, and their set would have additional business, but to get it, a host of additional officers must be employed and paid at each place.

December 21, *Monday*. Wrote Commodore Wilkes that his denial was not sufficiently explicit; that innocent parties were implicated in the publication of his letter, which was, he well knew, a breach of regulations as well as of faith, and the imputation resting upon them must be removed; that either the Department or he must have authorized or at least permitted the publication; that the Department or any connected with it would have no object in a surreptitious publication; that I was confident no one of the two or three clerks who were cognizant of the letter had been guilty, though his denial threw the act on them. If Wilkes, or some of his household avowed the act, it will relieve them. If shrewd he will do it or have it done, for he is in a dilemma; but no prompting of truth, or candor, or sense of right to the clerks or others will influence him.

I received a large budget of Rebel letters captured on board the Ceres. Faxon examined and arranged them for

publication. An exposure of some which I have read will have a good effect.

Returning from an early evening walk, I learned Stanton had called for me, and I went at once to the War Department. Seward and Chase were with him. Stanton read to me a letter which had been written in cipher, but which after two days' labor the experts had unlocked with the exception of a few words. Mention was made of "carrying out the programme" and the intention to seize two steamers. Certain allusions to Briggs, Cavnach, with a conviction on the part of Stanton that the letter was from Trowbridge,[1] and also other points and names struck me as not entirely unfamiliar. The trio had become puzzled, and Stanton called on me to assist, or hear my suggestions. They had come to the conclusion and were confident the "programme" was to seize one or more of the California steamers, and asked about gunboats. I did not entirely concur in their conclusions and told them the letters captured on the Ceres would furnish some light in regard to the persons alluded to, especially Trowbridge, Briggs, and C.; that I had not read the letters, but parts of several had been read to me and their publication would have a good effect; that they were with the Chief Clerk of the Navy Department, who was to copy and publish portions of them. If, however, Trowbridge was to be arrested, it might be best to suspend publication for the present.

There was a general wish to see the correspondence, and we agreed to meet at 8 P.M. for that purpose. In the mean time I was to send to Faxon to be on hand with the letters. When we met at eight, Faxon proceeded to read them. Those from Trowbridge to young Lamar[2] made some singular disclosures, and one of them made mention of a nephew of William H. Seward as being concerned in a cargo for running the blockade. This disturbed Seward more than I should have supposed, — for it was not as-

[1] N. C. Trowbridge, of New York.

[2] Col. C. A. L. Lamar, who had been a Confederate agent in England.

serted as a fact, — and if, as he remarked, there were among twenty or thirty nephews one traitor it would not be strange. It was thought best to stop the publication. I proposed that a portion — all, indeed, but the letters of Trowbridge and one of Frank Smith of Memphis — should be made public, confident the effect would be good. But I was overruled by the others, and Faxon was sent off to stop the publication. He was too late, however, for a portion of them had already been printed.

Telegrams were sent to Marshal Murray at New York to arrest Trowbridge forthwith, and hold him in close custody, and to Admiral Paulding to place a gunboat in the Narrows and at Throg's Neck to stop all outward-bound steamers that have not a pass.

December 22, *Tuesday*. Only Seward and myself were with the President at Cabinet-meeting. Seward is highly pleased with the course taken in regard to the captured letters. Wanted me to send him all of Trowbridge's which had not been published. I did so. He gave me a long confidential conversation about Mexican affairs which had been communicated by Mr. Corwin,[1] our Minister, under the strongest injunctions of secrecy. Before he got through, however, Seward let out that he had read the dispatch to Lord Lyons, and I think said he let Lord L. take it; assumed that Earl Russell, on learning the facts, would not feel more amiably disposed towards the French.

December 23, *Wednesday*. Congress has adjourned to the 5th of January. Little has been done as yet. There appears to be, I think, a good feeling among the Members, though there are petty intrigues among the small men in abundance.

December 24. I had a brief talk with Chase on certain financial matters, and gave him copies of some Rebel cor-

[1] Thomas Corwin.

respondence, — extracts of letters from young Lamar, showing that ——, of the firm of —— & —— is in league with certain traitors. Chase professed to have some previous knowledge of a similar character, but did not indicate wherein and I was not satisfied he had any information whatever on this matter. It is a weakness with him, — as if he wished others to believe him omniscient, or that no one else should know of matters relating to his Department which he does not possess.

The laws, he said, are not sufficiently stringent. He hoped Congress would pass some severe enactments on the subject of trading in gold. "Why not," I asked, "trade in gold as well as iron? Our depreciated currency has made gold merchandise, to be bought and sold, not a standard of value." I had but little time and no disposition for controversy. These ideas of forbidding, restricting, and regulating trade in gold and silver when Government has made the currency legal tender by law, are so absurd, and so repugnant to all my opinions and convictions, that I had no patience to listen to the remarks of a Secretary of the Treasury, the financial officer of the Government, a man of his professed principles, when I had anything else to do. I therefore left him abruptly.

December 25, *Friday*. Edgar returned from college; arrived at midnight. Greetings full, hearty, and cordial this morning. For a week preparations for the festival have been going on. Though a joyful anniversary, the day in these later years always brings sad memories. The glad faces and loving childish voices that cheered our household with "Merry Christmas" in years gone by are silent on earth forever.

Sumner tells me that France is still wrong-headed, or, more properly speaking, the Emperor is. Mercier is going home on leave, and goes with a bad spirit. S. and M. had a long interview a few days since, when S. drew M. out. Mercier said the Emperor was kindly disposed and at the

proper time would tender kind offices to close hostilities, but that a division of the Union is inevitable. Sumner said he snapped his fingers at him and told him he knew not our case.

Sumner also tells me of a communication made to him by Bayard Taylor, who last summer had an interview with the elder Saxe-Coburg. The latter told Taylor that Louis Napoleon was our enemy, — that the Emperor said to him (Saxe-Coburg), "There will be war between England and America" — slapping his hands — "and I can then do as I please."

There is no doubt that both France and England have expected certain disunion and have thought there might be war between us and one or more of the European powers. But England has latterly held back, and is becoming more disinclined to get in difficulty with us. A war would be depressing to us, but it would be, perhaps, as injurious to England. Palmerston and Louis Napoleon are the two bad men in this matter. The latter is quite belligerent in his feelings, but fears to be insolent towards us unless England is also engaged.

December 26, *Saturday*. The Dictator, turret vessel, was launched this A.M. in New York. This is one of a class of vessels that has become famous. She is of greatly increased dimensions to any hitherto constructed. I have full confidence that she will be a formidable fighting craft, but am not prepared to indorse her, or the Puritan, which is not yet launched, as cruisers. There are differences among naval men on this subject, but the turret vessels are steadily gaining friends among them, and early friends are becoming enthusiastic. Fox, himself a good sailor, and others give them unqualified approval. Fox is ready, he says, to cross the Atlantic or double Cape Horn with either. For harbor or coast defense these vessels are, I think, invaluable, and almost invulnerable. The fight with the Merrimac made for them rapid converts. When the

first turret vessel, the Monitor, was building, many naval men and men in the shipping interest sneered at her as a humbug, and at me as no sailor or judge, until she vindicated her power and worth in that first remarkable conflict. Then I was abused by party men because I had not made preparations for and built more.

There is constant caprice in regard to the Navy. Those who know least clamor most. It is difficult to decide what course to pursue, and yet I must prescribe a policy and be held accountable for it. If I go forward and build large and expensive vessels, I shall be blamed for extravagance, particularly if peace takes place. On the other hand, if I should not build, and we have, not only continued hostilities, but war with England or France, I shall be denounced for being unprepared. Yet it is patent that powerful, and expensive because powerful, structures are conducive to peace. A few strong, powerful vessels will conduce to economy because they will deter commercial nations from troubling us, and if not troubled, we need no large and expensive navy.

During the whole of this civil war, I have been beset and annoyed by interested patriots who had old steamers to sell which no one would buy. The agents of these parties crowded the Department, got Members of Congress to besiege it, and, because I did not think their crafts adapted to our wants, they, and in some instances the press and certain Members of Congress, engaged in abuse of me.

What we needed for this war and the blockade of our extensive coast was many vessels of light draft and good speed, not large, expensive ships, for we had no navy to encounter but illicit traders to capture. I acted accordingly and I have no doubt correctly, though much abused for it. A war with one or more of the large maritime powers would require an entirely different class of vessels.

In naval matters, as in financial, those who are most ignorant complain loudest. The wisest policy receives the severest condemnation. My best measures have been the

most harshly criticized. I have been blamed for procuring so many small vessels from the merchant service. But those vessels were not only the cheapest and the most available, but the most effective. In no other way could we have established an effective blockade of our extended coast. We wanted not heavy navy-built ships but such vessels as had speed and could capture neutral unarmed blockade-runners. There was no navy, no fighting craft, to encounter. Half a dozen small vessels required no more men and were not more expensive than one first-class ship, yet either one of the six small craft of light draught which were swift was more effective than the big ship for this particular duty. It was claimed the small light vessels could not lie off the coast in winter and do blockade service. Experience has shown the contrary. The grumblers have said our small naval-built gunboats have not great speed. Small propellers of light draught on duty for months cannot carry sufficient fuel and have great speed.

There is no little censure because fast vessels are not sent off after the Alabama, and yet it would be an act of folly to detach vessels from the blockade and send them off scouring the ocean for this roving wolf, which has no country, no home, no resting-place but such as *neutral* England and France may give her. When I sometimes ask the fault-finders to tell me where the Alabama is or can be found, assuring them I will send a force of several vessels at once to take her on being satisfactorily informed, they are silenced. Whilst these men blame me for not sending a fleet after the marauders, they and others would blame me more were I to weaken the blockade in an uncertain pursuit. Unreasonable and captious men will blame me, take what course I may. I must, therefore, follow my own convictions.

December 28, *Monday.* Senator Doolittle came and had an hour's conversation with me. Wanted, I soon saw, to ascertain my views without my being aware of his object;

hence his first conversation related to permits for trade, getting out cotton, and other matters connected with the Treasury. I frankly gave him my opinion, stated my unequivocal opposition to the whole system of trade-permits — these schemes to fight and feed the enemy — and to all favoritism. If there is to be trade with the Rebels, let all participate. There were plans to make the Navy a convenience to certain parties, and subject to certain regulations of the Treasury Department, which I disapproved and resisted in all its stages.

On the subject of the Presidency, which he says is opening, the public mind seems settling on the President as the proper candidate. D. says, however, that there is an active, zealous, and somewhat formidable movement for Chase, and that Chase clubs are being organized in all the cities to control the nominating convention.

December 29, *Tuesday*. Seward was not at the meeting of the Cabinet. Chase avoids coming in these days. Blair is ill. There has been some vicious legislation in Congress, which I at one time supposed was inadvertent but which I begin to think was not wholly without design. The maritime towns, from which we draw most of our seamen, are to be allowed no credit in the draft for men who enlist in the Navy. Of course the local authorities and public opinion in those communities are opposed to naval enlistments, which, with the high military bounties, are telling on the naval service. We need at least five thousand of the sailors who have been enticed by high bounties and the causes alluded to into the army. They are experts, can discharge seamen's duty; landsmen cannot fill their place. Having received the bounty, they would prefer reëntering the Navy, but the law has given the power to [allow them to] do so into the hands of the Secretary of War, and he is disposed to show his authority by refusing to yield up these sailors to their proper trade and calling. The President can order the transfer, but he dislikes to interfere with

and overrule Stanton. Wilson, Chairman of the Military Committee, acts with Stanton; Hale, Chairman of the Naval Committee, is indifferent; Congress hesitates; and the result is our vessels are not manned, the service is crippled, and the country must suffer.

December 30, *Wednesday*. Not long since I was blamed for not building more of the turret vessels; just now the same persons and papers abuse me for building so many. There is like inconsistency in regard to ordnance. I am attacked for not having more vessels before Wilmington, Mobile, and other places and thus making the blockade completely effective, and accused of neglect and indifference for not sending off twenty ships to hunt up the Alabama. Webb has just completed a frigate for the Italians, and I am found fault with because so skillful a mechanic as Webb is not employed by the Government, when he is building a large and more powerful vessel, the Dunderberg, for us. I have reason to believe that Webb himself is implicated in this assault on the Department, in order to help himself. He is a skillful builder and quite as skillful an intriguer. I would not deprive him of any credit, but I cannot award him any superiority over Lenthall or Delano as a naval constructor.

December 31, *Thursday*. The year closes more satisfactorily than it commenced. The wretched faction in the Free States which makes country secondary to party had then an apparent ascendency. They were dissatisfied with the way in which the War was conducted, — with what they called the imbecility of the Administration, — and, uniting with another faction which is opposed to the War, they swept the States. The country understands them better than it did. The War has been waged with success, although there have been in some instances errors and misfortunes. But the heart of the nation is sounder and its hopes brighter. The national faith was always strong, and

grows firmer. The Rebels show discontent, distrust, and feebleness. They evidently begin to despair, and the loud declarations that they do not and will not yield confirm it.

The President has well maintained his position, and under trying circumstances acquitted himself in a manner that will be better appreciated in the future than now. It is not strange that he is sometimes deceived and fails to discriminate rightly between true and false friends, and has, though rarely, been the victim of the prejudices and duplicity of others.

The Cabinet, if a little discordant in some of its elements, has been united as regards him. Chase has doubtless some aspirations for the place of Chief Executive, which are conflicting. Seward has, I think, surrendered any expectation for the present, and shows wisdom in giving the President a fair support. Blair and Bates are earnest friends of the President, and so, I think, is Usher. Stanton is insincere, but will, I have no doubt, act with Seward under present circumstances.

XV

An Estimate of Sumner — The Charges against Engineer-in-Chief Isherwood — Lincoln and Seward on Clay and Webster — Conversation with the Elder Blair and Governor Dennison — Discussion in the Cabinet as to opening Additional Ports in the South — Criticism of the Navy Department — Moses H. Grinnell and his Relations with the Department — The Finding of the Court of Inquiry on Wilkes's Letter — John P. Hale tells of Charges of Mismanagement in Connection with the Cherokee and R. B. Forbes.

January 1, 1864, *Friday.* A bright day ushers in the year. Yesterday's northeast storm has disappeared, and the clouds fell to the earth in heavy rain last night.

Went with my family to the Executive Mansion at 11 A.M. to pay our respects to the President. Foreign ministers and attachés were there. Navy and Army officers came in at half past eleven. The house was full when we left, a little before twelve.

Received at house until 4 P.M. Had official and friendly calls from Navy and Army officers, judges, foreign ministers, etc., etc., with such old friends of my own State as were in Washington, and not a few comparative strangers, who expressed warm personal and official regard.

January 2, *Saturday.* Double duty for yesterday's holiday. Senator Sumner called on Saturday as usual. After disposing of some little matters of business, he spoke of the President and the election. He says the President is moving for a reëlection, and has, he knows, spoken to several persons on the subject very explicitly. I told him the President had exchanged no word with me on the subject, but that I had taken for granted he would be a candidate, that I thought all Presidents had entertained dreams of that nature, and that my impressions are that a pretty strong current is setting in his favor. To this Sumner made

no response, affirmatively or negatively. I think his present thoughts are in another direction, but not very decidedly so. Neither of us cared to press the other. Whether he had in view to sound me I was uncertain, and am still.

In many very essential respects Sumner is deficient as a party leader, though he has talents, acquirements, sincerity, and patriotism, with much true and false philanthropy. He is theoretical rather than practical. Is egotistical, credulous to weakness with those who are his friends; is susceptible to flattery from any quarter, and has not the suspicions and jealousies that are too common with men in position. There is want of breadth, enlarged comprehension, in his statesmanship. He is not a Constitutionalist, has no organizing and constructive powers, and treats the great fundamental principles of the organic law much as he would the resolutions of the last national party convention. Towards the slaveholders he is implacable, and is ready to go to extremes to break up not only the system of bondage, but the political, industrial, and social system in all the rebellious States. His theorizing propensities and the resentments that follow from deep personal injuries work together in his warfare against that domineering oligarchy which has inflicted great calamities on our country and wrongs on himself. He would not only free the slaves but elevate them above their former masters, yet, with all his studied philanthropy and love for the negroes in the abstract, is unwilling to fellowship with them, though he thinks he is. It is, however, ideal, book philanthropy.

As Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, his services at this time are invaluable. He is, fortunately, in many respects the opposite of Seward, has higher culture and, on international law and the science of government, is vastly better informed and greatly the superior of the Secretary of State. But the latter has greater tact, more practicality, and better knowledge of parties and men, greater versatility of genius and unsurpassed pliability, so that he can more readily adapt himself to what-

ever may seem expedient. Sumner acts not always from fixed principles but earnest though prejudiced convictions, investigating questions in which he is interested elaborately, and brings learning and authorities to his support. Seward is earnest for his party, but has no great deference for political principles of any kind; his convictions or opinions are weak and change without hesitation if deemed expedient or if his party can be benefited. To such a Secretary an adviser like Sumner is valuable, yet Seward does not appreciate it. There is mutual want of confidence.

My impressions are that Sumner's present leanings are, after vague and indefinite dreams of himself, for Chase, who has ultra notions, but Chase has to some extent modified his opinions since our conversation last summer, when we took a long evening's ride. The subject of reconstruction was just then beginning to be earnestly discussed.

Sumner has not the arts that are the chief stock in trade, to use a mercantile phrase, of some tolerably successful politicians, and he is so credulous as to be often the victim of cunning fellows of greatly inferior capacity who flatter and use him. When Senator Dixon of Connecticut desired, and was intriguing for, a reëlection to the Senate, he contrived to get a *quasi* indorsement from Sumner in a general letter, which was used effectually to defeat Sumner's best friends in Connecticut and injure the cause nearest his heart. Dixon understood his weakness and made skillful application of it to dupe and deceive Sumner. Too late Sumner regrets his error, but will repeat it when a shrewd and cunning mind shall need to practice the deception. He can, right or wrong, stand firm and immovable on great questions, but is swayed by little social appeals to his kindness. His knowledge of men is imperfect and unreliable, and hence, while he will always have position with his party and influence its movements he will never be the trusted leader.

January 4, *Monday.* We have a snowstorm to-day, the

first of the season. Mails are irregular and have been for some days past. Ice in the Susquehanna obstructs crossing, and the ferry-boat, frozen in when crossing, remained in the stream sixteen hours with passengers on board. Ten years ago, on my way from Washington North, I was some six hours crossing the river at the same place on a severe winter's night. Chase, Charles Francis Adams, and Henry S. Foote — just elected Governor of Mississippi — were fellow-passengers.

January 5, *Tuesday.* Congress reassembled after a fortnight's vacation, or rather were to have assembled but there was not a quorum in either house. At the Cabinet council only a portion were present. The President in discussion narrated some stories, very apt, exhibiting wisdom and sense. He requested me to read an article in the *North American Review*,[1] just received, on the policy of the Administration, which he thought very excellent, except that it gave him over-much credit.

January 6. A patent lawyer named Dickerson prepared and published what he calls a plea or argument in a case before the court in Washington that is a tissue of the vilest misrepresentations and fabrications that could well be gathered together, if I may judge from such parts as I have seen. I do not see the *New York Herald*, in which it was published and paid for. The great object appears to have been a reckless assault on Isherwood, Engineer-in-Chief, but the Department is also in every way assailed. Of course the partisan press in opposition take up and indorse as truth these attacks, and vicious men in Congress of the opposition and equally vicious persons of the Administration side adopt and reëcho these slanders. It is pitiable to witness this morbid love of slander and defamation. That there may have been errors I cannot doubt, but not in the matter charged by Dickerson.

[1] An article by James Russell Lowell which was widely quoted.

I think Isherwood has exerted himself to discharge his duty, and serve the government and country. His errors and faults — for he cannot be exempt — I shall be glad to have detected and corrected, but the abuse bestowed is wholly unjustifiable and inexcusable. As he is connected with the Navy Department, any accusation against him, or any one connected with the Department, furnishes the factious, like J. P. Hale, an opportunity to vent their spite and malignity by giving it all the importance and notoriety they can impart. I hear of Hale and H. Winter Davis and one or two others cavilling and exerting themselves to bear down upon the Engineer-in-Chief. There is an evident wish that he should be considered and treated as a rogue and a dishonest man, unless he can prove himself otherwise. Truth is not wanted, unless it is against him and the Department.

January 7. The case of R. [L.] Law tried by court martial, which has been in my hands for a month nearly, was disposed of to-day. The court found him guilty on both charges and sentenced him to be dismissed from the Navy, but recommended him to clemency. Proposed to the President three years' suspension, the first six months without pay. This to be the general order, but if, at the expiration of six or eight months, it was thought best to remit the remainder of the punishment, it could be done.

"Look over the subject carefully," said the President, "and make the case as light as possible on his father's account, who is an old friend of mine, and I shall be glad to remit all that you can recommend."

Commodore Wilkes is behaving badly in many respects. I can do no less than order a court of inquiry in regard to the publication of his letter in violation of orders. He, after having been guilty of the act, evades, or tries to evade, the responsibility, and would see innocent persons rest under the imputation of having committed his offense. In regard to his age, his course is also equivocal and insult-

ing to the Department. By suppressing it he was for a time in commission as Commodore. But notwithstanding suppression and equivocation his age is pretty well authenticated from the files of the Department. A second circular was sent him, suggesting that he might not have received the first. He returned no definite answer but presumed the Department had his correct age from his father, and said he had not received the first circular. The third time he was written to, and he then answered, saying he was born in April, and that he is sixty-two. The records of the Department show that he is not only sixty-two but sixty-five.

January 8. At Seward's last night, who gave a party to the scientific men of the Academy now here. The Cabinet, heads of the foreign missions, the learned gentlemen and the committees on foreign relations of the two houses were present, with a goodly number of ladies. Agassiz, Silliman, Professors Story and Caswell, etc., etc., were present.

To-day at the Executive Mansion. Only Usher with myself was present, and no business transacted. Mr. Hudson of Massachusetts, formerly Member of Congress, was with the President. Conversation was general, with anecdotes as usual. These are usually very appropriate and instructive, conveying much truth in few words, well, if not always elegantly, told. The President's estimate of character is usually very correct, and he frequently divests himself of partiality with a readiness that has surprised me. In the course of conversation to-day, which was desultory, he mentioned that he was selected by the people of Springfield to deliver a eulogy on the death of Mr. Clay, of whom he had been a warm admirer. This, he said, he found to be difficult writing so as to make an address of fifty minutes. In casting about for the material, he had directed his attention to what Mr. Clay had himself done in the line of eulogy and was struck with the fact that,

though renowned as an orator and speaker, he had never made any effort of the sort, and the only specimen he could find was embraced in a few lines on the death of Mr. Calhoun. Referring to the subject and this fact on one occasion when Seward was present, that gentleman remarked that the failure was characteristic and easily accounted for, — Mr. Clay's self-esteem was so great, that he could tolerate no commendation of others, eulogized none but the dead, and would never himself speak in laudatory terms of a contemporary.

Both the President and Seward consider Clay and Webster to have been hard and selfish leaders, whose private personal ambition had contributed to the ruin of their party. The people of New England were proud of the great mind of Webster, his great intellect, but he had no magnetism, there was not intense personal devotion for him such as manifested itself for Clay. For years the Whig cause consisted in adulation of these two men, rather than in support of any well-established principles. In fact, principles were always made secondary to them.

I see by the papers that John P. Hale made an assault on the Navy Department, and tried to secure the adoption of a drag-net resolution, placing the Department on the defensive for the residue of the session. Under pretense of great regard for the country, he is really reckless and indifferent to its interests. Instead of encouraging and aiding the Department in its labors, he would divert it into a defense against groundless attacks from interested persons.

January 9, *Saturday.* Grimes tells me that the reports in last evening's papers are meagre and perverted, doing no justice to the Navy Department as it stood before the Senate, nor to the debate of yesterday. He says Hale was entirely used up, and had not a single friend in the Senate. Senator Clark, Hale's colleague, came to see me; says he has privately admonished Hale of the injury he was doing the

country, as well as bringing ruin upon himself, by his strange course. I am, personally, not sorry that Hale makes this exhibition of his vicious mind and tendencies. Utterly indifferent to the rights and feelings of others, holding a position of power and yet not of responsibility, he has slandered and defamed the good more than the bad, and delighted to show his immensity and ability from his place to abuse.

January 11, *Monday.* Mr. Seward sent to me at my house on Saturday evening a voluminous bundle of dispatches, which had been placed in his hands by Lord Lyons, relative to the case of the Chesapeake, and desired me after reading them to interchange views in regard to the course to be pursued.

The documents were, first, sundry papers from a Mrs. Henry of Halifax, complaining that her husband and a brother had gone on board the Chesapeake on the 15th of December, and she apprehended they were detained. The owner and captain of the schooner Intendant, which was in [Sambro Harbor] when the American gunboat Ella and Annie took possession of that vessel, says he saw them on board and did not see them leave. He further avers that when the Ella and Annie appeared off the harbor, the Chesapeake raised the American flag union down, and he with his vessel ran a few hundred yards further up the harbor; that the boats of the Ella and Annie after taking possession of the Chesapeake, boarded the Intendant, took some trunks that had been brought from the C. and a man, Wade, who had been secreted, etc., etc. The other papers related to the capture of the Chesapeake, her surrender to the Colonial authorities, etc., much as we have in the newspapers.

It is evident the first papers, relating to the Henrys and the schooner, were thrust into the foreground for a purpose, and are a matter which should have no connection with the act of piracy.

I called on the Secretary of State this morning and told him the case required no hasty action on his part. That it had gone into the Admiralty Court, which was all very well if the British authorities had anything to do in the premises. My advice is to wait, and not be drawn into any premature action.

Mr. Blair, the elder, and Governor Dennison of Ohio called on me last evening. The chief talk related to Presidential matters, current events, and proceedings in Congress. They were both at the President's to-day, and it seems some conversation took place in regard to Senator Hale's strange course towards the Navy Department, he being Chairman of the Committee. The President said it was to him unaccountable except in one way, and that did no credit to Hale's integrity. It was unpleasant to think a Senator made use of his place to spite a Department because it would not permit him to use its patronage for his private benefit.

Both Mr. Blair and Governor Dennison were pretty full of the Presidency, and I apprehend they had a shadow of doubt in regard to my opinions and preferences, and yet I know not why they should have had. The subject is one on which I cared to exhibit no intense partisanship, and I may misjudge the tone of public sentiment, but my convictions are and have been that it is best to reëlect the President, and if I mistake not this is the public opinion. On this question, while not forward to announce my views, I have had no concealment.

I am inclined to believe that there have been whispered misrepresentations from sly intriguers in regard to me that have given some anxiety to Blair and Dennison. The conduct of Dixon has been singular in some respects, and he has a willing tool in Brandegee.[1] . . .

January 12, *Tuesday*. Only three of us at the Cabinet-meeting, and no special business matters were brought

[1] Augustus Brandegee, a Member of Congress from Connecticut.

forward. I submitted to the President a dispatch from Commander Watson Smith at Pensacola relative to the disturbed condition of the people at Warrington. The port is blockaded, and the Rebels cut off from all shore supplies. In the mean time the Treasury agent has cut off the little communication that had been previously maintained by a few small dealers. The President requested me to consult with Chase, and any conclusion that we should come to he would affirm. Some little conversation followed as to the opening of additional ports. I remarked to the President that in my opinion it would be well to take some decisive and more general ground indicating progress towards peace. New Orleans being an open port, I asked, why might not the whole trans-Mississippi country above that place be thrown open to commerce? I told him my own convictions — and I had given the subject reflection — were favorable to the measure, and against the farther blockade of Red River and the country above that river on the west bank of the Mississippi. The President said the subject was worth considering and we must take it up.

January 15, *Friday*. A little ill for a day or two. Edgar and the Miss F.'s from Harrisburg left. At the Cabinet. Little done. Friends in Connecticut are some of them acting very inconsiderately. They feel outraged by the conduct of Dixon and others in procuring the nomination of Henry Hammond for marshal, a nomination eminently unfit to be made. The President was deceived into that matter. He was told that Hammond and the clique were his true supporters and friends, and that those opposed were his enemies. This falsehood the disappointed ones seem determined to verify by making themselves opponents.

January 16, *Saturday*. Had a call from General Frank Blair. He is bitter against Chase and the management of the Treasury Department, — its favorites and permits.

Not unlikely he exaggerates without intending it, but I apprehend there are reasons for some of his arraignments. We had some talk on the subject of opening the whole country west of the Mississippi to trade above New Orleans. He concurs with me.

January 18, *Monday*. A batch of letters has been sent us from the provost marshal, disclosing a mass of fraud and intrigue on the part of a set of assuming men that is as amusing as reckless. General Haupt, Naval Constructor Griffiths, Gwyn[?] of the Treasury, Hamilton Norris, and others figure in the affair. About a year since General H. published a series of questions for the improvement and progress of the Navy Department, which he and his associates appeared inclined to take into their keeping. This correspondence brings to light the secret intrigues of these scoundrels.

January 19, *Tuesday*. At the Cabinet to-day the President read letters from certain Louisiana planters and from General Banks and others, urging the admission of cotton within our lines. He also read the rough draft of a letter prepared by himself, designating New Orleans and Baton Rouge as depots for cotton to be brought thither, sold for "greenbacks," etc., etc. It had been submitted to Chase and Stanton previously, who both indorsed and perhaps advised, if they did not first suggest, it. Seward and Blair thought it might operate well. Stanton said General Grant was opposed to action in his command, but as Banks favored it, he thought it might be well to let the matter go forward as the President proposed. I suggested that the effect would be good to open the whole country west of the Mississippi above New Orleans. But the President said it might disturb General Grant.

The present demonstration of factious grumblers and interested knaves against the Navy Department is alleged want of speed in our boats. Mr. Fox, Isherwood, and others

are not able to submit to this abuse with as much composure as myself, and to stop their clamor Fox desires to challenge the Chamber of Commerce to a trial of speed. I told him that nothing would be made by it. If we were to have a trial and they were beaten, they would at once abuse the Navy Department for wasting time and money in boat-racing. Governor Dennison was present and thought the effect of a race would on the whole be well. The Naval Committee are detaining the Eutaw here, and that boat might be used. Somewhat reluctantly and doubtingly I assented to his writing a letter to G. W. Blunt, who I suspect first proposed it.

Have a strange letter from C. B. Sedgwick, who is under pay, revising the Navy laws, but spends much of his time in advocating suspicious claims from scheming contractors. He advises, with some tact and ability, an abandonment of the trials now in progress in Philadelphia for malfeasance.

January 22, *Friday*. Very little done at the Cabinet. Stanton, Usher, and myself were the only ones present. Some general talk and propositions. Last night the President gave a dinner to the members of the Cabinet, judges of the Supreme Court, and a few others, with their wives. It was pleasant. A little stiff and awkward on the part of some of the guests, but passed off very well.

The challenge of Fox has created some noise. When read in the Chamber of Commerce, Moses H. Grinnell appeared much disturbed, — said the Navy had no fast boats, the challenge was improper, undignified, etc. Moses unwittingly showed his true colors, — was drawn out. He has professed to be friendly, but I have not been deceived by him, for I have been satisfied that he was secretly inimical, though not with manly courage to avow it. Moses has been a successful merchant, and generous with his money in a certain way. He has some good and some weak qualities in his profession, but his great failing has been in political aspirations. With commercial party principles,

no sound or correct knowledge of government, or of individual rights, he has hungered for office and believed that money ought to secure it. He has seen with envy the success of Morgan and some others, whom he believes no more capable or deserving than himself, and had hoped the change of administration would bring him into distinction. It had been his hope that Seward would have the nomination at Chicago, and he showed grief and great vexation as well as others over the result. When President Lincoln came to Washington, he was invited to, and did, breakfast with Moses at his house in New York. But these attentions failed to bring the coveted honors. He had been a large shipping merchant and why should he not be Collector or even take charge of the Navy. His friend Seward was in the Cabinet but from western New York. Moses lived in the city of New York, and was from New England. All did not answer. After the blockade was declared he came twice to Washington and wanted, evidently, to be consulted. On one, and perhaps both occasions, he brought with him C. H. Marshall, an old ship-master, opinionated, conceited, and infinitely worse than Grinnell. I treated them courteously, listened to their opinions, invited them to be communicative, but did not adopt their views. Marshall, however, declared himself well satisfied with what he understood to be the management of the Department, and Grinnell did not dissent. This was, I think, in May, 1861. Some two months, perhaps, later, Moses was again in Washington; wanted the Department to procure more vessels; urged the purchase of a fleet of merchant ships on which there might be placed a small armament to establish an efficient blockade. I gave but little attention to his advice or offers of service. Two good steamers in my opinion would be more effective than the sixty sailing vessels which he proposed to purchase. By the kindness of Mr. Seward he had an interview with the President and laid before him his plans. Charleston he would blockade with ten or a dozen ships lying off outside. I happened to

enter the President's room about the time Grinnell was leaving, and he spoke quite oracularly about the "swash channel"; repeated that expression several times. He knew the harbor and the "swash channel." Could blockade it with ten or a dozen good ships. The President subsequently informed me of the plan of Mr. Grinnell, in the presence of the Secretary of State, and each of them kindly commended him. I told them I knew Mr. Grinnell well, but that my views did not correspond with his, and my arrangements were not such as would admit of employing him.

On several occasions since I have had the benefit of Mr. G.'s advice and promptings, but am not aware that I was ever benefited by either. His friend Marshall was sometimes artfully pushed forward and chafed into an abuse of me personally. It has been some time, however, since I have been assailed by him personally, and he does not appear to have united with Moses on this occasion.

January 23, *Saturday.* Hiram Barney, Collector at New York, called on me. Is feeling depressed. The late frauds, or lately discovered frauds, annoy him. . . .

Chase sends me a letter in relation to Pensacola and the suggestions I made to open Trans-Mississippi to trade and commerce. In each case he fails to respond to my propositions favorably. Although late, I am for means that will bring peace and kindly feeling. Commerce and intercourse will help.

The trial of Stover, a contractor, by court martial at Philadelphia has come to a close. He is found guilty on three charges and is fined $5000, and is to suffer one year's imprisonment in such prison as the Secretary of the Navy may select. It is, in my opinion, a proper punishment for a dishonest man, but the law is in some of its features of a questionable character. Likely it will be tested, for Stover has money, obtained by fraudulent means from the government. I have deliberated over the subject and come to the

conclusion to approve the proceedings, and send Stover to Fort Lafayette instead of a penitentiary. Captain Latimer writes that Stover has left Philadelphia and gone to New York. I have therefore written to Admiral Paulding to arrest and send him to Fort L. The President concurs.

January 26, *Tuesday.* Stanton tells some curious matters of Jeff Davis, derived from Davis's servant, who escaped from Richmond. The servant was a slave, born on Davis's plantation. Mrs. Davis struck him three times in the face, and took him by the hair to beat his head against the wall. At night the slave fled and after some difficulty got within our lines. He is, Stanton says, very intelligent for a slave and gives an interesting inside view of Rebel trials and suffering. It should be taken, perhaps, with some allowance.

The court of inquiry in relation to the publication of the letter of Commodore Wilkes has been brought to a close. Although not as explicit and positive as it might have been, there is, and could be, no other conclusion than his guilt. When brought before the court and advised of the testimony, which showed the letter was in the hands of the newspaper folks twenty-four hours before it reached the Department, he declined to make any statement. I do not see how a court martial can be avoided. He is insubordinate, evasive, and untruthful; reckless of others' rights, ambitious, and intensely avaricious.

January 27, *Wednesday.* The proposed race is likely to fall through. I do not regret this, and since it has this termination I do not regret that the test was proffered. The grumblers and defamers have their mouths closed for a time on that topic.

Stover, the contractor, came to-day to the Department in the full belief he had been acquitted by the court martial. I sent for the provost marshal to arrest him, and

while the papers were being made out he came into my room. He denounced Missroon, Jacobs, and others as swindlers and corrupt. Said M. had cleared fifty thousand dollars, was building a magnificent house and dealing in stocks. I told him M. had not that reputation, but that my impressions of him were favorable. He said he had made money out of the government, but not through the Navy Department, that he, S., had lost more than forty thousand dollars by the Navy Department. When he left my room Provost Marshal Baker arrested him in the hall. He was excessively alarmed, I am told, and declined to ride with the provost marshal until told he must do so.

The Eutaw made a trip down the river that was satisfactory in its results, showing good speed. Another trip is to be made on Saturday, for the naval committees.

January 29, *Friday*. But little done at the Cabinet. Seward says the London *Times* says the Navy Department is now the most abused of any Department, but it knows not why, for no Department could have been better managed.

John P. Hale called to tell me the Department was charged with mismanagement in the purchase of the Cherokee. I asked what the charges were. He said it was stated that at the first examination she was reported not a suitable vessel for naval purposes and we therefore did not purchase her; that she was sold, and then again examined but with the same result, but that [R.] B. Forbes again persuaded us to have her reëxamined by persons from New York, and she was put off on the Navy at a large advance. But Forbes was dissatisfied and said the Navy Department expected to pay a great price to remunerate him for services which he had rendered in a friendly way.

I told him that there was some truth in the fact that the vessel was first reported against and subsequently we had a different report, but the whole story of paying off Mr. Forbes was novel,—a pure fiction. He said he knew no-

thing of the facts, only what he heard and read; that the subject had got in the newspapers and was being discussed. It was causing a good deal of excitement, he said, in Boston. He professed to have mentioned the subject to me in a friendly way. I thanked him and told him I would look into the case.

January 30, *Saturday*. Called on Secretary of State by appointment, relative to dispatch to Lord Lyons. While there, I mentioned that he continued to send inquiries from Lord Lyons relative to captured British blockade-runners who were retained in custody on his suggestion. He said he wished that course pursued, but the change of policy required time to effect the change. Lord Lyons, he said, could not at once reconcile his government to the measure. He alluded to my having at an early period desired that these persons should be held, but that he had doubted it because they ought not to be permitted to run the blockade more than a second time.

XVI

Donald McKay compliments the Navy Department — The War Department suspected of instigating Attacks on the Navy Department — The President on the Dominican Question — A Talk with Chase on Financial Matters and the Charleston Situation — The President as a Politician — A Pleasant Half-Hour with Preston King — An Estimate of the Man — Chase's Use of the Treasury Machinery to further his Presidential Aspirations — The Departmental Character of the Administration — Carpenter's Picture of President Lincoln and his Cabinet — The President greets an Admirer — Chase's Electioneering — A Secret Expedition to Florida — Movement on Behalf of Retired Naval Officers.

February 1. I had a call from Mr. Sedgwick, who yesterday proposed visiting Stover in Fort Lafayette and getting from him a confession as to those who have participated in, or been cognizant of, frauds on the government. Gave him a letter to Marshal Murray. An hour or two later Provost Marshal Baker called on me and related the particulars of conveying Stover after arrest. Says Stover is alarmed and ready to make disclosures; told him many facts; many persons implicated. Says Henderson, clerk in Treasury, has been arrested; that Clarke will be to-morrow. Thinks Sedgwick will not do well with Stover. Was going to New York to-morrow, to-day will attend to it. I sent Fox to withdraw letter from Sedgwick to Murray.

To-day Baker called on me at the Department and had a sprawling mass of suspicions which he says were communicated by Stover, implicating persons above suspicion. I told him I gave no credit to the statement, but authorized him to satisfy himself as regarded the person (F.) whom he chiefly criminated.

Late in the day, Jordan, Solicitor of the Treasury, called upon me in relation to Baker, from which I come to the conclusion, after what I have seen of B., that he is wholly unreliable, regardless of character and the rights of persons,

incapable of discrimination, and zealous to do something sensational. I therefore withheld my letter for him to visit Fort Lafayette.

Mr. Rice, Chairman of Naval Committee in the House, informs me that the trip of the Eutaw on Saturday was highly satisfactory. The efforts of strangely unprincipled men to create prejudice against the Navy and impair public confidence in its efficiency are most surprising and wholly incompatible with either patriotic or honest intentions.

February 2, Tuesday. Senator Grimes made a very good speech to-day in the Senate on naval affairs, in which he introduced a letter from Donald McKay, the eminent shipbuilder of Boston, complimenting our naval vessels and doing justice to the Bureau of Construction and Engineering, which have been of late so much abused. Truth will vindicate itself, though slowly. The persistent assault on the Navy Department is not without a purpose. There is design in it. The contractors, the claim agents, the corrupt portion of newspaper correspondents, and unprincipled Members of Congress are all engaged in this business. I am not mistaken in the fact that there is villainy in the scheme, for villains are combining in it. There is a conviction in my mind, although I cannot cite a tangible or certain fact to establish it, that the War Department had secretly instigated these attacks. I am, however, impressed with an earnest belief that there is a mischievous design to divert attention from the acts and doings of the military branch of the service by starting off with a hue and cry against the Navy.

But little of importance was done at the Cabinet-meeting. Several subjects discussed. Seward was embarrassed about the Dominican question. To move either way threatened difficulty. On one side Spain, on the other side the negro. The President remarked that the dilemma reminded him of the interview between two negroes, one of whom was a preacher endeavoring to admonish and en-

lighten the other. 'There are," said Josh, the preacher, "two roads for you, Joe. Be careful which you take. One ob dem leads straight to hell, de odder go right to damnation." Joe opened his eyes under the impressive eloquence and awful future and exclaimed, "Josh, take which road you please; I go troo de wood." "I am not disposed to take any new trouble," said the President, "just at this time, and shall neither go for Spain nor the negro in this matter, but shall take to the woods."

February 3, *Wednesday*. Had a brief talk to-day with Chase on financial matters. He seems embarrassed how to proceed, but, being fertile in resources, listening to others still more fertile, and having resorted to expedients in one instance, he will probably experience little difficulty in finding another. There will, however, come a day of reckoning, and the nation will have to pay for all these expedients. In departing from the specie standard and making irredeemable paper its equivalent, I think a great error was committed. By inflating the currency, loans have been more easily taken, but the artificial prices are ruinous. I do not gather from Chase that he has any system or fixed principles to govern him in his management of the Treasury. He craves even beyond most others a victory, for the success of our arms inspires capitalists with confidence. He inquired about Charleston; regretted that Farragut had not been ordered there. I asked what F. could do beyond Dahlgren at that point. Well, he said, he knew not that he could do more, but he was brave and had a name which inspired confidence. I admitted he had a reputation which Dahlgren had not, but no one had questioned D.'s courage or capacity and the President favored him. The moral effect of taking Charleston was not to be questioned; beyond that I knew not anything could be gained. The port was closed.

The conversation turned upon army and naval operations. He lamented the President's want of energy and

force, which he said paralyzed everything. His weakness was crushing us. I did not respond to this distinct feeler, and the conversation changed.

Almost daily we have some indications of Presidential aspirations and incipient operations for the campaign. The President does not conceal the interest he takes, and yet I perceive nothing unfair or intrusive. He is sometimes, but not often, deceived by heartless intriguers who impose upon him. Some appointments have been secured by mischievous men, which would never have been made had he known the facts. In some respects he is a singular man and not fully understood. He has great sagacity and shrewdness, but sometimes his assertion or management is astray. When he relies on his own right intentions and good common sense, he is strongest. So in regard to friends whom he distrusts, and mercenary opponents, in some of whom he confides. A great and almost inexcusable error for a man in his position.

February 5, *Friday*. Went last night to Blair's reception and also to a party at Riggs's, the banker. At the latter there were many semi-Secessionists whose modified views and changed opinions and course enable or induce them once more to mingle with the vulgar world from which they have kept secluded since these troubles commenced. The party was magnificent in its display and profusion, worthy the best, and the house is baronial in its appearance. In other days the Secession aristocracy gathered there, though at Corcoran's and some others the association was more earnest and hearty. Riggs was a sympathizer, not an actor; his social affinities, rather than his political opinions, were with the Rebels.

February 12, *Friday*. Incessant employment early and late has prevented me from making entries, and there has been little of public interest to engage me. On Monday evening I attended a party at Admiral Shubrick's which

could not be avoided, and was detained later than I intended, but also went at 11 P.M. to Tassara's, the Spanish Minister. Both were very dull, the latter crowded.

Committees and resolutions of inquiry from Congress have flocked in upon the Department. Many of the latter were frivolous, and most of them for mischievous purposes. How little do the outside public know of the intrigues of Congressional demagogues, who, under the guise of great public economists, are engaged in speculating schemes and fraudulent contrivances to benefit themselves, pecuniarily! John P. Hale, who is eminently conspicuous in this class of professed servants and guardians of the public treasury, has been whitewashed for his three-thousand-dollar retainer. The committee excuse him, but propose a law which shall inflict ten thousand dollars' fine and two years' imprisonment on any one who shall again commit the offense.

Little of particular interest in the Cabinet-meeting. Seward left early, and Chase soon followed. I to-day wrote the latter, expressing pretty deliberately and effectually my opinion in regard to permits for cutting ship-timber in North Carolina. It may give offense, but I could do no less than in a mild form object to the favoritism and monopoly that the system engendered.

Blair, who, with Senator Doolittle, was at my house this evening, avers I am a fortunate man above others. He says my opponents are making me great, and that I am fortunate in the attacks and abuses that are bestowed, and repeats an aphorism of Colonel Benton, that "a man is made great by his enemies, and not by his friends." There is doubtless some truth in the remark, but not, I apprehend, as regards myself.

February 13, *Saturday*. Senator Hale called on me to-day. Was very plausible and half-confidential. Baker, the detective, had been before his committee. Had told many things of men in the Department. Lowering his

voice, Hale said, "He tells some things about your Chief Clerk that are very suspicious." I cautioned the Senator about receiving all the gossip and suspicion of Baker, who had no powers of discrimination, little regard for truth, believed everything bad, suspected everybody, and had no regard for the character and rights of any man. Told him I would be answerable for the honesty of Faxon, that no truthful man could doubt it, and that, having heard Baker's scandal and suspicion, I requested him to bring me a fact, or find one if he could from his lying detective.

This pitiful Senator is devoting his time and that of his committee in a miserable attempt to bring reproach upon the Navy Department, to make points against it, to pervert facts, and to defame men of the strictest integrity. A viler prostitution of Senatorial position and place I have never witnessed. The primary object is to secure a reelection for himself, and a love of defamation attends it. Had a pleasant half-hour with Preston King, who made a special call to see me. Few men in Congress are his equal for sagacity, comprehensiveness, sound judgment, and fearlessness of purpose. Such statesmen do honor to their State and country. His loss to the Senate cannot be supplied. I like his successor, Morgan, who has good sense and will, in the main, make a good Senator, but he cannot make King's place good. I know not who can. Why are the services of such men set aside by small politicians? But King is making himself useful, and has come to Washington from patriotic motives to advise with our legislators and statesmen, and to cheer and encourage the soldiers.

I sometimes think he is more true to principles than I am myself. Speaking of Fernando Wood, we each expressed a common and general sentiment of surprise and disgust that any district could elect such a Representative. But the whole city of New York is alike leprous and rotten. This brought the question, How can such a place be regenerated and purified? What is the remedy? While I expressed a reluctant conviction, which is gradually coming over me,

that in such a vicious community free suffrage was abased, and it was becoming a problem whether there should not be an outside movement, or some restriction on voting to correct palpable evil in municipal government, King maintained the old faith and would let the evil correct itself. If factious or partisan violence will go so far as to elect men like Wood or Brooks; if men of property and character will prostitute themselves to vote for them and consent to have their city misgoverned and themselves misrepresented, let them take the consequences. The evil will correct itself. After they have disgraced themselves sufficiently and loaded themselves with taxes and debt, they will finally rouse to a sense of duty, and retrieve the city from misrule and bad management and their district from misrepresentation. Such is the reasoning of Preston King.

I felt a return of old enthusiasm of former years, when in the security of youth I believed the popular voice was right, and that the majority would come to right results in every community; but alas! experience has shaken the confidence I once had. In an agricultural district, or a sparse population the old rule holds, and I am not prepared to deny King's conclusions, but my faith in the rectitude of the strange material that compose a majority of the population of our large cities is not strong. The floating mass who have no permanent abiding-place, who are the tools of men like Wood and Brooks, who are not patriots but party demagogues, who have no fixed purpose or principle, should not by their votes, control and overpower the virtuous and good. Yet they do. Some permanent element is wanting in our system. We need more stability and character. In our municipalities there needs some modification for good government.

February 15, *Monday.* Mr. Sedgwick on Friday wished a pass to visit Stover, the convict in Fort Lafayette, and would get from him statements that would open frauds

and misdeeds upon the government. I disliked to give him such pass, and yet was not fully prepared to deny him, because he might be useful in aiding the Department to bring offenders to light. I therefore put him off with a suggestion that he might consult the marshal, and telegraph me if necessary. I gave a permit, however, to Colonel Olcott, and Baker, the detective. To-day Colonel Olcott telegraphs me that he visited Stover at Fort Lafayette, and found Sedgwick with him by permission of General Dix.

There is evidently a desire among the officials of the War Office to make difficulty, and no disposition to aid the Navy Department in ferreting out offenders. These committees in Congress are like them in many respects.

The movements of parties and partisans are becoming distinct. I think there are indications that Chase intends to press his pretensions as a candidate, and much of the Treasury machinery and the special agencies have that end in view. This is to be regretted. The whole effort is a forced one and can result in no good to himself, but may embarrass the Administration. The extreme radicals are turning their attention to him and also to Frémont. As between the two, Chase is incomparably the most capable and best, and yet I think less of his financial ability and the soundness of his political principles than I did. The President fears Chase, and he also respects him. He places a much higher estimate on the financial talents of Chase than I do, because, perhaps, we have been educated in different schools. The President, as a follower of Clay, and as a Whig, believes in expedients. I adhere to specie as the true standard of value. With the resources of the nation at his disposal, Chase has by his mental activity and schemes contrived to draw from the people their funds and credit in the prosecution of a war to which they willingly give their blood as well as their treasure.

Some late remarks in the Senate have a mischievous tendency, and there is no mistaking the fact that they have their origin in the Treasury Department. The Adminis-

tration is arraigned as a departmental one in its management of affairs, and unfortunately the fact is so, owing chiefly to the influence of Seward. But Chase himself is not free from blame in this matter. He did not maintain, as he should have done, the importance of Cabinet consultations and decisions at the beginning, but cuddled first with Cameron, then with Stanton, but gained no strength. Latterly his indifference is more manifest than that of any other one, not excepting Stanton. This being the case, it does not become his special friends to assail the President on that score. Chase himself is in fault.

The President commenced his administration by yielding apparently almost everything to Seward, and Seward was opposed to Cabinet consultations. He made it a point to have daily or more frequent interviews with the President, and to ascertain from him everything that was being done in the several Departments. A different course was suggested and pressed by others, but Chase, who should, from his position and standing, have been foremost in the matter and who was most decidedly with us then, flinched and shirked the point. He was permitted to do with his own Department pretty much as he pleased, and this reconciled him to the Seward policy in a great degree, though he was sometimes restless and desired to be better informed, particularly in regard to what was doing in the War Department. Things, however, took such a course that the Administration became departmental, and the result was the President himself was less informed than he should have been and much less than he ardently craved to be, with either the War or the Treasury. The successive Generals-in-Chief he consulted constantly, as did Seward, and, the military measures being those of most absorbing interest, the President was constantly seeking and asking for information, not only at the Executive Mansion, but at their respective offices and headquarters. Scott, and McClellan, and Halleck, each influenced him more than they should have done, often in a wrong direction, for he better

appreciated the public mind and more fully sympathized with it than any of his generals. Neither of the three military men named entered into the great political questions of the period with any cordiality, or in fact with any correct knowledge or right appreciation of them. Yet they controlled and directed military movements, and in some respects the policy of the government, far more than the Cabinet.

February 16, *Tuesday.* No matters of much moment at the Cabinet. But three present. Submitted to the President a letter from Admiral Lee, inclosing a permit to steamboat Princeton to trade within the blockading region. The President wished me to see Chase and ascertain how the vessel cleared.

February 17, *Wednesday.* Went this A.M. to Brady's rooms with Mr. Carpenter, an artist, to have a photograph taken. Mr. C. is to paint an historical picture of the President and Cabinet at the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation.

I called to see Chase in regard to steamer Princeton, but he was not at the Department. Thought best to write him, and also Stanton. These schemes to trade with the Rebels bedevil both the Treasury and the Army.

February 18, *Thursday.* Chase sent to my house this evening a miffy letter. I had written him freely and frankly my repugnance to the system of permits granted, or proposed to be granted, for cutting and collecting ship-timber. Heaton, his agent, proposed to stop granting more either from compunction or to give favorites a monopoly. I expressed my opposition to the whole system as demoralizing, and denied the right to give permits to commit waste. Chase takes exception and perhaps offense; says my letter reads like a lecture and is very unacceptable. Thinks I neither wrote nor read it.

I answered that I wrote it without suggestion from any one; that I was unreserved, and perhaps unfortunate, in my expressions, but that the opinions were honestly entertained and were my convictions, but I disclaimed any intention to lecture or give him offense. The party and political movements just at this time make Chase sensitive, and I award him due allowance.

February 19, *Friday.* Am perplexed about charges and specifications against Wilkes. His conduct has been bad, — such as will perhaps break him. I think it might, if pressed to extremes, but I do not wish to be severe. Although insubordinate, disobedient, selfish, arrogant, and imperious towards inferiors, and somewhat insolent to all, I hoped to let him off without a trial. But he would not permit; the more forbearing I was, the more presumptuous and offensive he became, trampling on regulations and making public issue with the Department on false assumptions and misrepresentations. The Navy dislike him and would treat him harshly; I have no malevolence towards him and do not want him punished to the extent he deserves and is liable, but he cannot be permitted to go unrebuked.

As I went into the Cabinet-meeting a fair, plump lady pressed forward and insisted she must see the President, — only for a moment, — wanted nothing. I made her request known to the President, who directed that she should be admitted. She said her name was Holmes, that she belonged in Dubuque, Iowa, was passing East and came from Baltimore expressly to have a look at President Lincoln. "Well, in the matter of looking at one another," said the President, laughing, "I have altogether the advantage." She wished his autograph, and was a special admirer and enthusiastic.

February 20, *Saturday.* Two or three committees are investigating naval matters, — contracts, supplies, en-

gineering, etc. Senator Hale labors hard to find fault with the Department; is searching, as with a lantern, for errors and mistakes. Has detectives, rotten and disappointed contractors, and grouty party men of the Navy, as well as politicians of every kind of politics, to aid him, but has thus far seemed to injure his friends as well as himself and not the Department.

February 22, *Monday*. Wrote a line to Seward that I had not been officially notified of the raising of the blockade of Brownsville, Texas. The whole thing has been done most bunglingly by him, Chase, and the President. The subject was discussed two or three weeks since in regard to Brownsville and one or two other places, but we came to no conclusion, and nothing farther was said to me, nor was I aware that any action had been taken in regard to it till I saw the proclamation in the newspapers.

A circular, "strictly private," signed by Senator Pomeroy and in favor of Mr. Chase for President, has been detected and published. It will be more dangerous in its recoil than its projectile. That is, it will damage Chase more than Lincoln. The effect on the two men themselves will not be serious. Both of them desire the position, which is not surprising; it certainly is not in the President, who would be gratified with an indorsement. Were I to advise Chase, it would be not to aspire for the position, especially not as a competitor with the man who has given him his confidence, and with whom he has acted in the administration of the government at a most eventful period. The President well understands Chase's wish, and is somewhat hurt that he should press forward under the circumstances. Chase tries to have it thought that he is indifferent and scarcely cognizant of what is doing in his behalf, but no one of his partisans is so well posted as Chase himself.

The National Committee appointed at Chicago met today. As Connecticut had sent forward no one as a substitute in my place, I was for a brief time with the committee.

I judge that four fifths are for the reëlection of the President. The proceedings were harmonious, and will, I think, be satisfactory. I do not like this machinery and wish it could be dispensed with.

February 23, *Tuesday.* Chase did not come to the Cabinet-meeting to-day. As usual, two or three were absent. Usher has gone to the front, where there was a ball and fancy demonstrations. He is fond of matters of that kind and of the little flying gossip that is afloat.

February 24, *Wednesday.* I am pressing on the matter of Wilkes. He and his family are moving to extricate him from the results of his own insubordination and folly. Fred Seward called on me by request of his father with a letter of Mrs. Wilkes respecting the court martial. Told Fred the matter must go on, I had borne and forborne with Wilkes until he presumed upon my kindness so far as to compel action if discipline was to be observed in the service. Fred expressed a conviction that I was right.

February 25, *Thursday.* I called at the Treasury Department this morning relative to funds to pay the hands in the Navy Yard at Broooklyn. Chase appeared very well and calm. We talked of many difficulties. He wants the bank circulation suppressed. I told him we could not have two currencies, for the baser would always expel the better. He said the banks and individuals were hoarding the government paper and there must be some legislation to prevent the banks from circulating their paper, and it was desirable there should be a public sentiment in that direction. I do not think he has any sound, well-matured, comprehensive plan of finance, or correct ideas of money and currency, but he is quick of apprehension and has mental resources, and is fertile in expedients not always sound but which have been thus far made available.

February 26, *Friday.* Only three of us were at the Cabinet council to-day. Some matters of interest were touched upon, but there was soon a discussion on recent political movements. The President has been advised of the steps taken to forward the Chase operations. Circulars were put in his hands before signed.

A spicy debate sprung up yesterday on the passage of the Navy Bill. Holman, a Copperhead partisan, made an attack on me, — sprawling, personally vituperative, and abusive. H. Winter Davis sustained him, but flung his vindictive spite more malignantly at Fox, whom he called a "cotton-spinner," than at me. He eulogized Du Pont, whom the Navy Department had withdrawn from the command of the South Atlantic Squadron, and denounced the Balaclavian order compelling him to attack Sumter, etc., etc. Kelly and Griswold defended the Department, but Frank Blair made the best points, and told Davis that, while he was active in getting up investigations against the Navy Department, he opposed all investigation of the Treasury. Things took such shape that I perceive the instructions to and correspondence with Du Pont will be called for.

February 27, *Saturday.* A very busy day, and I am very indifferently well to discharge the mass of business; but got through with it before 5 P.M. Am surprised that I do not commit more serious mistakes. Received the charges and specifications against Wilkes. Convened the court, or ordered it to be convened, on the 9th. Am sorry to be compelled to do this, but there is no alternative.

Sedgwick calls about the prize law which Judge Sprague and Dana have got up. In the main it is pretty well done, but needs some amendments.

Seward told me in a whisper that we had met a serious reverse in Florida. It is [not] mentioned in the papers. This suppressing a plump and plain fact, already accomplished, because unfortunate, is not wise. The Florida expedition

has been one of the secret movements that have been projected, I know not by whom, but suspect the President has been trying a game himself. He has done such things, and, I believe, always unfortunately. I may be wrong in my conclusions, but his secretary, John Hay, was sent off to join the forces at Port Royal, and this expedition was then commenced. Admiral Dahlgren went off on it without orders from me, and had only time to advise me he was going. Though he has general directions to coöperate with the army, he would not have done this but from high authority.

February 29, *Monday.* A strong effort is on foot by naval officers who have been retired and their friends to set aside the law and the action under which they were retired. Working to an end persistently, without organized opposition, they may, with a weak Congress, effect their object, though to the public detriment. It would be easy for me to yield to my sympathies for these men and their families, who are in many cases most deserving of sympathy, could I disregard my duty and the public interest. To oppose them is to incur unforgiving resentment; to yield will be a disregard of my obligations. I shall not be sustained in standing firm by my friends; nevertheless my course is plain. I have prepared a letter that gives my views, which I will send to the two houses. A call is made for all correspondence that has taken place, as well as the meagre records of the Retiring Board. The correspondence cannot be collected without time, but the argument and record can go in at once.

Have received the prize law by Dana and Judge Sprague and made suggestions and corrections. On scrutinizing, it appears to need more emendations than I at first supposed.

XVII

General Blair attacks Chase in the House — Solicitation for Political Subscriptions — Urging the Promotion of Colonel Hawley — Good News of Colonel Dahlgren — Chase's Attitude as to Permits and Trade Regulations — News of Ulric Dahlgren's Death — Grant at the President's Reception — Grant receives his Commission as Lieutenant-General — An Impression of Grant — The Exposure of Contract Frauds — The New Draft for 200,000 Men discussed in the Cabinet — A Call from Solicitor Whiting — The Scarcity of Seamen for the Navy — Conversation with Admiral Dahlgren on General Gillmore — Conversation between Seward and the Artist Carpenter on the Great Events of the Administration.

March 1, *Tuesday*. Very little of importance to-day at the Cabinet. Neither Chase nor Blair was present. Gen. F. Blair made, I am told, a severe speech against Chase, in the House on Saturday. It is unfortunate that these assaults should be made on political friends, or those who should be friends. I shall be sorry if, under the existing circumstances, Chase should be a candidate for President. If he asks my opinion I shall advise him not to enter the field; but I do not expect that he will ask my advice, he probably knows my opinions. Some of his training measures do not strike me favorably, but I am sorry General Blair should assail them with such acrimony. There is, however, a feeling of partisanship in St. Louis and Missouri that is unsparing. Chase has, I have thought unnecessarily and unwisely, identified himself with the radical element there, the enemies of Blair.

Old Mr. Blair called on me on Sunday evening to look to the interests of Acting Rear-Admiral Lee, his son-in-law, who is uneasy lest he shall not obtain promotion. I told Mr. B. that L. could not have the vote of thanks with the President's recommendation without some marked event to justify it. That the higher appointments must be kept open to induce and stimulate our heroes. That Lee

was doing his duty well, and, should there be no others to have earned the great distinction when the war is over, he would be among those who would compete for the prize.

Judge Edmunds and Senator Lane called on me on Monday morning for funds. Showed me two papers, one with Seward's name for $500. On another was Blair's (Postmaster-General) and Secretary Usher, each for $500, with some other names for like amount. Told them I disapproved of these levies on men in office, but would take the subject into consideration; I was not, however, prepared to act. Something should, perhaps, be contributed by men when great principles are involved, but these large individual subscriptions are not in all respects right or proper. Much of the money is wasted or absorbed by the electioneers. I shall soon be called upon by Connecticut men to contribute to their election, and I cannot afford to comply with all the demands that are made for party, nor do I like the hands in all cases which the money is to pass into.

March 2, *Wednesday*. There are exciting rumors respecting army movements in front. From what I learn, Kilpatrick, with a large cavalry force, is to make a raid upon Richmond with a view of capturing the place. He is sanguine that he will be successful. I have my doubts, for there have been so many attempts upon the place that some precautionary measures must have been taken for defending it. However, I am glad the movement is to be made if there is a reasonable hope of success.

Rear-Admiral Dahlgren came suddenly upon us this evening. I sent him leave three weeks or more ago. He is looking well after his long and fatiguing service.

March 3, *Thursday*. Governor Thomas of Maryland called on me to-day in behalf of Commodore Ringgold, who wants a vote of thanks on the recommendation of the President. He says that he and other Members of

Congress — Senators and Representatives — have had an interview with the President, who is ready to send in the recommendation, if I will make it out. Told the Governor that it was all wrong; that I well understood Ringgold's intrigue; that the movement was contrary to the policy of the Department, was not to be thought of, would be injustice to others; and that it would be better to repeal the whole law than do anything of the kind. I promised him, however, to see the President, and did so.

I called on the President in the afternoon, who said he should be governed entirely by my views in the matter. The subject was therefore soon disposed of. I then brought up the subject of promoting Colonel Hawley. He said the measure was full now, but he hoped to be able to do justice to H. one of these days. I remarked that I had avoided pressing him on the subject of military appointments, but this was one for a meritorious man from my own State, that I had it much at heart, and had repeatedly brought it to his notice, etc., etc. He gave me credit for forbearance beyond others and assured me he should try not to forget this case when there was opportunity. I have no aid from the Members of Congress in this matter, and from some of them I apprehend there is opposition, or something akin to it. I regret that Hawley fails to appreciate Dahlgren and his service, and rightly to comprehend the whole question of naval and military operations at Charleston. But this partisan weakness shall not prevent me from doing him justice.

March 4, *Friday*. Seward sends me the copy of a communication which he proposes to send to Lord Lyons respecting the rights and duties of our naval officers, particularly those on blockade duty in the Gulf. It is a singularly weak and erring document. My first thought was to criticize and attempt to correct it, but this could not well be done without making a new paper of it and would appear badly. Talked over the subject with Fox and also with Watkins.

Finally gave the latter my views, suggested the points, and directed him to prepare a letter based on these points.

A pleasant Cabinet-meeting. Chase and Blair both absent. Seward and Stanton had a corner chat and laugh about Chase, whose name occasionally escaped them, and whom they appeared to think in a dilemma, and they were evidently not unwilling we should know the subject of their conversation. I could not avoid hearing some of their remarks, though I changed my position to escape them.

A week or two since, Admiral Lee sent me certain papers in the case of the steamer Princeton, then at Norfolk, among them a permit from General Butler, authorizing the vessel to go on a trading voyage in the sounds and rivers of North Carolina, provided Admiral Lee would consent. The latter would not consent without orders from the Navy Department, and I approved his course in refusing. Now the Messrs. Oliver & Co. file a paper arguing their claims to proceed on the voyage under a permit of General Butler, dated last December, authorizing the Princeton to clear for Hampton Roads. This paper of Oliver & Co. is addressed to the Assistant Secretary and ingeniously designed to cover the transaction. Watkins and Fox were disposed to favor the latter application, but I told them it was not permissible, pointed out the discrepancies, told them the vessel had, as authorized, cleared for Hampton Roads, but she wanted to go further, which that permit did not warrant; and a further permit was secured.

March 7, *Monday*. Called yesterday to see Admiral Dahlgren. While there the President and Secretary of War came in with a telegram from General Butler, announcing that his son, Colonel Dahlgren, was alive and well with a force of about one hundred at King and Queen. Of course we were all gratified. The President was much affected.

To-day I have, or rather Fox, who has special charge of the matter, had, word from Olcott, the employé of the War

Department, stating he had found evidence of enormous frauds by Scofield, Savage, and Raymond, and wanted the whole of them arrested, or he had them arrested. Wished a guard detailed to seize Savage's store, etc. When Fox brought me the papers, I said to him that the whole subject had been committed to him, and I could not undertake, with my other duties, to enter upon the details of frauds by these contractors. Besides I doubted the rightfulness of seizing men and their papers and valuables on mere suspicion. Advised him to consult legal gentlemen at the War Department, Olcott being a detective assigned by the Secretary of War.

A long letter from Chase in relation to permits and trade regulations, explaining his position, and showing not only some sensitiveness but a little irritation. His letter is based on a reply to two communications made by me on the 18th *ult.* in regard to the Ann Hamilton and the Princeton. I think him wrong in his conclusions as regards these vessels, and also mistaken as to the course and position of others. In the matter of the embargo first, and subsequently in that of communication and traffic in the Rebel regions, he took ground with me, but failed me and slid in with the others when action became necessary. I disliked the scheme of trade regulations, but it was concluded to have them, on the permits of the Treasury, War, and Navy Departments. Soon he deputed the subject of clearances to others, and Stanton deputed authority to grant permits to his officers, and abuse and demoralization followed.

March 8, *Tuesday.* Received a telegram from Admiral Lee this P.M., confirming a rumor that was whispered yesterday of the death of young Dahlgren. He was surrounded, it seems, by superior forces near King and Queen Court-House, and fell attempting to cut his way through. Most of his command was captured. A few escaped and got on board of the gunboat which had been sent for their relief.

A more gallant and brave-hearted fellow was not to be found in the service. His death will be a terrible blow to his father, who doted upon him and not without reason. I apprehend this raid was not a wise and well-planned scheme. Tested by results, it was not. Whether the War Department advised it I do not know. I heard it spoken of indefinitely and vaguely, but with no certainty till the expedition had started.

Fox is full of zeal to get hold of the fraudulent contractors and all that belongs to them, and the whole subject is committed to him. I exceedingly dislike these irregular proceedings. There should be proper law officers to whom these matters should be committed, and not impose them upon the heads of Departments. I must try to have Congress take the matter in hand, and pass the necessary laws, or devise some proper action. I do not like matters as they now are.

March 9, *Wednesday*. Went last evening to the Presidential reception. Quite a gathering; very many that are not usually seen at receptions were attracted thither, I presume, from the fact that General Grant was expected to be there. He came about half-past nine. I was near the centre of the reception room, when a stir and buzz attracted attention, and it was whispered that General Grant had arrived. The room was not full, the crowd having passed through to the East Room. I saw some men in uniform standing at the entrance, and one of them, a short, brown, dark-haired man, was talking with the President. There was hesitation, a degree of awkwardness in the General, and embarrassment in that part of the room, and a check or suspension of the moving column. Soon word was passed around for "Mr. Seward." "General Grant is here," and Seward, who was just behind me, hurried and took the General by the hand and led him to Mrs. Lincoln, near whom I was standing. The crowd gathered around the circle rapidly, and, it being intimated that it would be

necessary the throng should pass on, Seward took the General's arm and went with him to the East Room. There was clapping of hands in the next room as he passed through, and all in the East Room joined in it as he entered. A cheer or two followed. All of which seemed rowdy and unseemly. An hour later the General and Mr. Seward and Stanton returned. Seward beckoned me and introduced me and my two nieces.

To-day I received a note from the Secretary of State to be at the Executive Mansion quarter before 1 P.M. The Cabinet was all there, and General Grant and his staff with the Secretary of War and General Halleck entered. The President met him and presented to the General his commission [1] with remarks, to which the latter responded. Both read their remarks. General Grant was somewhat embarrassed.

A conversation of half an hour followed on various subjects, but chiefly the war and the operations of Sherman.

March 10, *Thursday.* The developments of fraud and swindling by contractors, and I fear by Navy agents and probably other officials, are represented to be astounding. Olcott, the detective, is an employé of the War Department and has been detailed to us for duty. I know less of him than I wish, for one intrusted with so delicate and responsible a duty. Fox is so greedy to get hold of the fellows that I fear he does not sufficiently respect private rights. I therefore hope Olcott is discreet and truthful.

March 11, *Friday.* A pleasant meeting of the Cabinet, and about the time we had concluded General Grant was announced. He had just returned from a visit to the Army of the Potomac, and appeared to better advantage than when I first saw him, but he is without presence. After a very brief interview, he remarked to the President that he should leave this P.M. for Nashville, to

[1] As Lieutenant-General of the United States Army.

return in about two weeks, and should be glad to see the Secretary of War and General Halleck before he left. There was in his deportment little of the dignity and bearing of the soldier but more of an air of business than his first appearance indicated, but he showed latent power.

I called this evening on Governor Morgan to consult in regard to a suitable lawyer in New York to take charge of our proceedings with contractors and others. He recommends Bliss [1] as on the whole the best and most fitting person we could have. Says he is intimate with Olcott, and really his prompter. I am not satisfied with intrusting this matter entirely to Olcott, who is expected here to-morrow.

March 12, *Saturday*. Olcott has arrived and been most of the day with Fox, Grimes, and Odell.[2] They all came to me about 2 P.M. and represent the papers in O.'s possession as disclosing a terrible state of things. Odell and Gooch told me on Thursday that they had examined the books and papers seized, and that they showed fraud and villainy such as had never been known, and urged the arrest of Keeler, Koons, and others. Brown, the Navy Agent here, and Henderson in New York, they say, are implicated.

To-day I am told the same thing by the others also. I remarked that the Navy Department had no solicitor or law officer whom I could consult, or with whom I could share responsibility. Grimes and the others enjoined upon me not to hesitate for a moment but to seize and lock up all who are implicated or suspected.

March 14, *Monday*. I spent yesterday with Fox, Faxon, Olcott, and a writer on the papers seized. They are bad enough, showing depravity and wickedness, but in many

[1] George Bliss, Esq., was retained by Scofield, and Mr. Nathaniel Wilson was engaged by the Navy Department. (See page 543.)

[2] Moses F. Odell, Member of Congress from New York.

cases the names of persons are drawn in who are, I believe, guiltless of wrong.

I am not exactly satisfied with Olcott. Coming on in the cars with a criminal witness, he most indiscreetly talked in the sleeping-car of Henderson, Brown, Koons, and others, and their remarks reached the Navy Agent, who was also on board and called on me and stated the facts. Such a conversation in a public car was improper, and the person is not a proper one to have the liberty, character, and rights of others at his disposal. Fox, however, in his ardent nature, gives Olcott full credence and support, and is ready to follow his suggestions and suspicions to any extreme. I am reluctant to violate great fundamental principles of right. Fox says Senators Fessenden and Grimes beg that I will not hesitate.

I called on Judge Blair this morning and had half an hour's conversation. He advises me to press on; says that there is no doubt I am right, that all of these contractors are scoundrels; and thinks I have erred in not at once laying hold of the Navy Agents everywhere and taking possession of their papers. While I cannot think well of scarcely one of the Navy Agents, I am disinclined to the harsh and unnecessary exercise of power, especially as there is no explicit law or authority. Security to persons and papers has been a maxim in my political creed, and I cannot relieve my mind from it, even when compelled to take measures with bad men.

March 15, *Tuesday*. At the Cabinet the principal subject was the issue of a new proclamation, calling for a new draft of 200,000 men in consequence of the Navy draft and other demands. There are about 800,000 men in the field, among them some sailors drawn into the army by improper legislation, and the reckless, grasping policy of the army managers, who think less of the general welfare than of narrow and selfish professional display. It did not seem to me that the call was necessary or even expedient,

but I perceived it had been determined upon by Halleck, Seward, and Stanton, and that the President had yielded his acquiescence, and opposition was useless. Blair said nothing. Usher gave a slow but affectedly earnest affirmative. Seward said the object was to compel certain Democratic localities to furnish their proportion, and it was desirable to take advantage of the current which was setting in strong for enlistment. The movement did not strike me favorably.

Henderson, the Navy Agent at New York, and Parke Godwin called this evening. He was disturbed by the Olcott investigations, wanted to consult and advise with me, hoped I would be frank. Thought himself injured by newspaper articles and by Olcott's proceeding. Wished to know what charges or specifications there were against him. I told him I was in no condition to impart information or give advice, or sufficiently informed as to what had taken place to make any statement, even if it was proper, to him; that, if he had done right or nothing wrong, he need be under no apprehension; that his name was much mixed up with certain corruptionists and contractors who were under arrest, and against whom appearances were very bad; that he, better than I, or any one, knew how much there was in all this and whether there was any cause for censure or complaint. He averred there was no cause of complaint against him, — that he was guilty of no wrong. Made inquiries about Olcott, and told of improper and insinuating interrogations put to witnesses, that were unjust to him (H.). I told him I knew nothing of those matters; that I had heard of a most impolitic and reprehensible conversation in the sleeping-car between Olcott and others with him, as to his business and as to persons implicated. Told him O. was an attaché of the War Department, loaned to us for the occasion.

It was my object to listen, and to communicate nothing of the very little I knew of the investigation, and I made them aware of this. I remember that many names were

mentioned and some of them, without explanation, were in the shade, but that I was confident some who were thus implicated could explain the transactions satisfactorily.

March 16, *Wednesday*. I have matters arranged for young Mr. Wilson to go to New York and attend to the subjects that are undergoing investigation. Gave him cautionary advice both yesterday and again to-day. Want vigilance and firmness but not harshness or oppression.

March 17, *Thursday*. Sent a letter to Chase in reply to his rather captious communication concerning the Ann Hamilton and the Princeton. Shall not be surprised if he takes offense, for I think I have put him in the wrong, and this is to him very uncongenial. In this respect he differs greatly from Seward, who will receive correction very easily, provided others do not know it.

March 18, *Friday*. Seward read to-day a letter on the subject of emigration with a proposed bill for a law on the subject. Did not strike me favorably, though no one else took exceptions. I remarked quietly to Seward that I thought we should be careful about meddling with the subject on many accounts; we might retard instead of promoting emigration, and if the Government attempted to interfere and take upon itself the burthen, it would cause the whole private effort to cease. Millions are now contributed to aid friends to emigrate, but this would wholly stop if the Government came in to assist. He thought there might be some danger if we were not careful, but something must be done to pacify the feeling. Usher wanted something done. Chase read over the letter and law and appeared to acquiesce. The thing does not impress me favorably. As a general thing I am averse to government bounties.

March 19, *Saturday*. The Wilkes court martial moves

slowly. Thus far I have no reason to be dissatisfied with the court. Wilkes himself strives to make it a personal matter. I have no feeling on the subject. Would rather he should not have driven me into the work, and shall be glad to have it disposed of.

March 21, *Monday*. Wilson returned from New York on Saturday. Called to-day and made report in case of the contractors. Says the evidence is strong and conclusive against them; will be ready with charges and specifications in about a week. I told him it was my wish there should be a speedy trial; I also desired that the wives and counsel of the prisoners might visit them. Whiting, Solicitor of the War Department, called. My letter to the Secretary of War, requesting him to direct Whiting to give this Department his assistance and advice in criminal transactions was objectionable. The Secretary could not *direct* him, and he would not communicate with the Secretary because the word "direct" was in the note. Told him the mere misuse of a word should not be permitted to embarrass a public measure. That I was willing to substitute another word. He said he would prepare something to meet the case. Tells me that Seward refers questions to him, some affecting Navy captures. This is an eye-opener. The two are cunning, but they expose each other.

Tom [1] has gone with Admiral Dahlgren to Fortress Monroe after the body of his son Ulric, expected from Richmond.

March 22, *Tuesday*. At the Cabinet-meeting Chase manifested a little disturbance of mind at my letter respecting the Ann Hamilton and the Princeton, sent in reply to his somewhat arrogant letter to me. Seward asked him if he had any gold to sell. He said no, if S. wanted to make money he had better get a permit from General Butler to carry in military supplies, and then persuade me to let the

[1] Thomas G. Welles, son of the Secretary.

vessel pass the blockade. He then made a wholly perverted statement; confounded the two cases; said *he* never looked behind the military permit, which was sufficient for the Treasury. "But," said I, "General Butler explicitly states that this *trading permit* to a Baltimorean to trade in North Carolina was based on *your* 52, 53, and 55 trade regulations, and I should like to know if they will bear that construction." "Ah," said he, "the permit was before the regulations were promulgated." "No," I replied, "they were distinctly and particularly cited as his authority."

Chase did not pursue the subject, but tried to pass it off as a joke. His jokes are always clumsy; he is destitute of wit. It was obvious that he was nettled and felt himself in the wrong.

Seward said the Chesapeake had arrived from Halifax under convoy of the revenue cutter [Miami]. This whole thing is ludicrous. A convoy was no more wanted than if the vessel had been in Long Island Sound. But Seward applied to me for a gunboat. I declined and turned him over to the Treasury, if an armed vessel was required to bring the prisoners, which was a part of the case. It is a simple business, but an ostentatious parade and announcement may glorify the State Department.

March 23, *Wednesday.* I have to-day a lame and not very commendable letter from Chase, yet nothing very bad. He wants the courage and candor to admit his errors.

March 24, *Thursday.* Tom and Admiral Dahlgren returned from Fortress Monroe, but without the remains of young Dahlgren.

We are running short of sailors and I have no immediate remedy. The army officers are not disposed to lose good men, and seem indifferent to the country and general welfare if their service can get along. Commodore Rowan writes that the times of the men are running out and no

reënlistments; the army is paying enormous bounties. Between thirty and forty vessels are waiting crews.

March 25, *Friday.* At Cabinet to-day, I brought up the subject of a scarcity of seamen. The President seemed concerned, and I have no doubt was. Stanton was more unconcerned than I wished, but did not object to my suggestions. I had commenced, but not completed, a letter to the President urging the importance and necessity of an immediate transfer of 12,000 men to the Navy. The army has by bounties got thousands of sailors and seamen who are experts. This letter I finished and had copied after my return. On reading it to Fox it stirred him up, and the prospect is certainly most unpromising.

Chase, who sat beside me when I first made mention of the difficulty we were experiencing from the effects of the enrollment act and the policy pursued by the War Department, remarked that nothing could be expected where there were no Cabinet consultations and no concerted action. Stanton and the President were in private consultation at the time in a corner of the room. This is no unfrequent occurrence between the two at our meetings, and is certainly inconsiderate and in exceeding bad taste. Chase was, I saw, annoyed and irritated.

Mr. Bates and others soon left. Usher sat quietly and intent, not listening perhaps to catch a word, but U. has great curiosity.

March 26, *Saturday.* I went early this A.M. to the President on the subject of procuring a transfer of seamen from the Army to the Navy. After reading the papers he said he would take the matter in hand, and before I left the room he rang for his man Edward and told him to go for the Secretary of War, but, stopping him before he got to the door, directed him to call the Secretary of State first. In this whole matter of procuring seamen for the Navy there has been a sorry display of the prejudices of

some of the military authorities. Halleck appears to dislike the Navy more than he loves his country.

Olcott, the detective, is here. Has been called to W. by the War Department. He, like those of his employment, is full of mystery, discussed fraud, overwhelming villainy, etc.; but much of it is mere suspicion, or matter susceptible of explanation. Not but that there is great rascality, — sufficient without exaggerating or aggravating it. I did not care to see him and cautioned Fox not to let his judgment be biased by O. The whole of these harsh proceedings are repugnant to my feelings.

Had a conversation with Admiral Dahlgren concerning operations at Charleston, ironclads, army matters, etc. Gillmore has high qualities as an engineer, but very little as a general in command. Lacks administrative ability, powers of organization, and has not that talent which relies on itself and keeps its own counsel. From what D. says, I think Gillmore must have acquiesced at least in the newspaper assaults on D. and the Navy, which if so, is greatly to his discredit. Dahlgren would never have assented to or permitted such assaults on Gillmore.

March 28, *Monday*. Saw Mr. Wilson yesterday relative to the arrests of, and proceedings against, fraudulent contractors. Told him he must take charge of the matter, be mild towards the prisoners, let them be as little interrupted in their business as possible. He appears sensible, discreet, and judicious, and I hope will manage nicely and well. I dislike the whole affair and think great responsibility is improperly on me.

The President sent for Fox and myself on Saturday evening. Fox, who had been deputed to negotiate matters with Halleck relative to transfers, was disgusted and a little overreached and had also written as well as myself to the President. The latter desired to see us both Saturday P.M. and requested an order might be prepared which we took to him this A.M. It was less mandatory than I

wished, but I know his reluctance to come in conflict with the Secretary of War, — certainly not in a harsh manner. The order was mild and his own, and for the Secretary of War to issue to carry it into effect. He wished me to write an order for the Secretary of War. I could see the President wished to have before him the practical working. Gave him an order forthwith.

Captain Rolando came to-day, pursuant to orders, relative to his intercepted letter to Fox and the capture of the William Peel. Thinks the letter interpolated. I am fearful Seward will, in this case, yield too much to Lord Lyons.

March 29, *Tuesday.* Not long at Cabinet-meeting. Chase still feels that he did not make a good case in the matter of the Princeton. He inquired with assumed nonchalance how I got on with Lee and Butler in the matter of permits. I told him the whole subject of trade belonged to the Treasury, and I gave myself no further concern about it than to stop abuse through naval officers. He denied that he had anything to do with matters of trade within the Rebel lines. I replied that General Butler gave permits for trade and quoted the trade regulations for his authority, and when I referred the matter to him for explanation, he had taken no exception. Chase seemed stumped. Said the regulations had not been officially promulgated. I told him that I knew not whether they were or not, but if they had been I asked if they authorized the proposed trade. He said they did not.

Told Mr. Wilson he must look into Johnson's case, for I did not like it should be longer suspended.

March 30, *Wednesday.* A severe storm last night and to-day. Mrs. Welles had arranged for a party this evening. The rain ceased about sundown. The evening passed off pleasantly. A large and choice company and many celebrities.

Secretary Seward fell in with Mr. Carpenter, the artist,

in the parlor. Carpenter is getting out a large painting of the President and the Cabinet at the time the Emancipation Proclamation was under consideration. The President and Cabinet have given him several sittings, and the picture is well under weigh. Mr. C. thinks this act the great feature of the Administration, as do many others likely; but Seward said it was but an incident following and wholly subordinate to other and much greater events. When C. asked what, Seward told him to go back to the firing on Sumter, or to a much more exciting one than even that, — the Sunday following the Baltimore massacre, when the Cabinet assembled or gathered in the Navy Department and, with the vast responsibility that was thrown upon them, met the emergency and its awful consequences, put in force the war power of the government, and issued papers and did acts that might have brought them all to the scaffold.

Few, comparatively, know or can appreciate the actual condition of things and state of feeling of the members of the Administration in those days. Nearly sixty years of peace had unfitted us for any war, but the most terrible of all wars, a civil one, was upon us, and it had to be met. Congress had adjourned without making any provision for the storm, though aware it was at hand and soon to burst upon the country. A new Administration, scarcely acquainted with each other, and differing essentially in the past, was compelled to act, promptly and decisively.

END OF VOLUME I

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